

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

NONCONFORMIST.

VOL. XXIII.—NEW SERIES, No. 915.]

LONDON: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1863.

[GRATIS.]

Religious Anniversaries.

THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

The thirty-fourth annual session of the Congregational Union of England and Wales was commenced on Tuesday, at the Weigh House Chapel. The attendance of ministers and delegates was very large, completely filling the lower part of the chapel, while the galleries were crowded with spectators.

The chair was taken at half-past nine o'clock by the Rev. Enoch Mellor, M.A., minister of George-street Chapel, Liverpool, and the proceedings were commenced in the usual manner, by a devotional service.

The Rev. E. MELLOR then ascended the pulpit and delivered the Annual Address. After a few introductory remarks, he passed in review the principal public events since the last autumnal meeting. The marriage of the Prince of Wales, the distress in Lancashire, and the war in America, then came under notice, and in connection with the last-named topic, slavery came in for a large share of unqualified condemnation. Whatever, said the chairman, might be the opinions of the various members of the Union as to the cause of the war, the manner and the spirit in which it was conducted, and the rights asserted by both belligerents, there could be but one feeling with regard to the avowal on the part of the seceding States to establish a nation on the basis of slavery. (Cheers.) Whatever else might be the issue of the war, he hoped that the bonds of slavery would be broken, and that the oppressed would go free. Returning to Europe, the chairman alluded in tones of sympathy to the patriotic struggle now being made by the Poles, and to the critical state of affairs in Italy, offering a passing condemnation to the policy of the Emperor of the French in occupying Rome with a French garrison. He then brought forward the subject of the Bicentenary celebration, which he contended had left behind it an influence that would abide with and bless those who had engaged in it for years to come. They were not worshippers of saints, and they had not gone to the heroes of the ejection as unto masters, for they only acknowledged one master—Christ. Nor had they professed to pay homage to all their opinions or actions, either political or religious. What they paid homage to was the spirit which recognised God as the highest Being in the universe, and conscience as the most sacred in connexion with mankind. If in some points they differed from their ancestors, it was because the 200 years which had intervened between them had been educational in their influence; and he contended that true Independency did not consist in a perpetuation of the same theories from age to age, but rather in moulding and adapting those theories to the varied circumstances of the times. In celebrating the ejection of the 2,000, they had, unhappily, been brought into collision with some of their brethren in the Established Church of England. That was a circumstance which he deeply regretted. They but meant to visit the shrines of those heroes, and, lo! they had scarcely started before they were met by armed men. The pilgrimage became a battle, which the pilgrims never sought, but which, when thrust upon them, they could not shun. They intended to honour the memory of the illustrious dead, without fighting, if possible—but with fighting, if necessary. At all events, they intended to honour them, and they had accomplished their purpose. (Loud cheers.) The literature, whether expository, political, or polemical, which had grown out of the celebration, was now before the public, and they confidently appealed to that bar for judgment as to the place where would be found most scholarship, candour, truthfulness, and Christian gentleness. Nor had that celebration exhausted itself in praises of the dead; it had aimed at practical results, and had secured them. It had been charged with failure, and failed it had to satisfy everybody, but that could scarcely be expected. It had also, perhaps, failed to keep the generosity of people within the bounds which it was supposed it would reach. (Laughter.) Results like that, when some of their wealthiest men had found their ordinary sources of income dried up, were far from being a failure; but the numerous edifices which had already risen, and were still rising up, for the worship of God, proclaimed that the movement of which they were the result and expression had been one of the noblest and most triumphant of which history contained any record. The speaker then passed in review the theological controversies of the year,

alluding more especially to the two volumes published by Bishop Colenso, and to the letters which had appeared in the *Times* respecting the prosecution of Professor Jowett at Oxford. In the light of those facts the abortiveness of the Act of Uniformity was surely sufficiently apparent. He said that the opinions propagated by Bishop Colenso afforded a wide field for remark. After dwelling at some length upon the general tendency of such speculations, and their recurrence at stated intervals from age to age, he laid down a few general reflections, in the light of which he thought that the difficulties raised by Bishop Colenso would cease to be difficulties at all. In the first place, he observed, that the Bishop had carried his arithmetical habits of thought into the Bible without a due regard to the difference between laws which regulate language and the strict processes of mathematical demonstration. Such expressions as *tout le monde* in French, and "all the world" in English, were never interpreted according to their exact literal meaning; and why should such principles of interpretation be applied to all the expressions contained in the historical parts of Holy Writ? The Bishop of Natal could not stand such a test himself; for in his reply to the letter of the archbishops and bishops, he commenced by saying that he had seriously considered the address forwarded to him by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and signed by a great number of archbishops and Bishops of the Church. (Laughter.) It would be deemed a captious criticism which should assert that the reply of the Bishop was spurious, because the number of Archbishops in the Church of England could not by any possibility be called great. The second reflection was, that the Bishop had completely overlooked the genius of the Semitic languages in general, and the Hebrew in particular; and had had transferred modern notions of historical writing to documents written before history was a science, and in a language absolutely incapable of supplying those niceties of expression that were to be found in modern tongues. The third reflection was, that with respect to numbers and other such details, the Bishop seemed to think that divine inspiration controlled the copyists of Scripture as much as the original writers; whereas, in point of fact, neither copyists nor translators were exempt from the usual liabilities to err. Those three general observations would meet the greater portion of the Bishop's objections to the Pentateuch, and the remainder of his difficulties would yield to the critical examination of the books themselves. But the gravest aspect of the work was that which bore upon the credibility of Christ and the religion which he had founded. Attempts had been made to divorce the Gospel from the Pentateuch, so that the former might float safely if the latter sank. The contrary, however, was the fact; Christ and Moses must stand or fall together. Christ never taught that he was immolated to the past, but he took his stand upon it. Having dismissed this subject, the chairman proceeded in a very solemn manner to put some considerations before the meeting, with regard to the character of the Independent ministry and its adaptation to the wants of the times. First and foremost, he contended that they must never lose sight of the importance of true piety in a minister. The mass of people would never be converted, nor would the principles of Independency be promulgated amongst them to any great extent, by simply explaining and indicating the particular polity which it enforced. It was, however, highly important both for the interests of the denomination and of mankind at large, that the Gospel should be preached with great earnestness, and even with enthusiasm. Depend upon it that the religious body that should be found to preach the Gospel with the greatest simplicity, fervour, and power, would be that which in the end would rise into the greatest influence. He deprecated any effort on the part of ministers to become rhetorical, or what was termed intellectual preachers. The truly successful preacher was shown in making great things simple to the understanding, and not in obscuring things which were little. He also expressed himself of opinion that ministers who were fully awake to the importance and responsibility of their position would not neglect to cultivate the true art of preaching in order to seek eminence in scientific or literary pursuits. They must ever remember that they were ambassadors and not scholars, or philosophers, or historians; and they must bear in mind the solemn truth that the minister who was led astray from his work, through the seductive influences of worldly temptation, or gain, or ambition, became an

enemy to the truth, and incurred a fearful responsibility. No retribution was like that which awaited the man who, once being a preacher to others, himself was a castaway. Referring to the influence of scepticism on the individual mind of the minister, he said that it must not be supposed that truly earnest men were not at times visited by the dark cloud of scepticism. When it came it was unsought and unwelcome, and was the very valley of the shadow of death. But when doubt or unbelief became a tenet instead of a vision, the minister was bound in all honesty to cease from preaching the faith which he discontinued to believe. There was far more hope for the honest preacher of error, than the dishonest preacher of truth. The truths of Scripture, however, were not always to be apprehended, weighed, and balanced by the mere exercise of the intellect. Spiritual truth was apprehended by the affections; and the man who sought to solve religious duty by mere thinking would discover ere long that he was on a bootless enterprise. They had heard of the verifying faculty of man, but were sometimes apt to forget the verifying power of earnest labour, and even of affliction. Actual contact with temptation or sorrow often brought a man back to Christ, when philosophy and vain conceit led him astray for a time, because then he felt the living power of Christianity. If he would take his theology from any man—God forbid he should do—he would prefer taking it from the village pastor who was living in intimate fellowship with God by prayer, and was instant in season and out of season to promote His glory, rather than from the most learned professor whose speculations and researches were carried on in seclusion from actual life, and might be as false as they were brilliant, and as deceptive as they were profound. (Cheers.) Then, again, if they would make their ministry successful, it ought to be marked by enthusiasm. It was too much the fashion in the present day to decry enthusiasm in the pulpit, as if the theme which was there discoursed upon was not the most vitally important that concerned man. Men tolerated enthusiasm in scientific or literary pursuits, and why should they not look upon it as becoming in connection with religion? As a minister he would say, Give us a strong faith in the Gospel, and a corresponding enthusiasm, and then other qualifications would grow out of those as their natural product. The concluding remarks of the chairman were as follows:—"And now, fathers and brethren, in closing this inaugural address, a sense of sorrow falls upon me as I reflect that when another May's sun shines in the heavens, and its blossoms and flowers enrich the gardens and the fields with their glory and fragrance, some of this assembly will have fallen on sleep. The faces which are seen in this meeting of the Congregational Union vary from year to year. Fresh ones are seen of young soldiers who have just girded on their armour, and who have as yet scarce proved it. The lustre and inflexibility of newness are yet upon it, and as we look upon the wearers we all pray that they may be valiant in the fight, and faithful unto death. And the faces of others are here who are now in the high noon of life, culminating in their strength, both of mind and body, the ripeness of practical experience having succeeded to the rawness of young and somewhat theoretic life. And the faces of veterans are here, who, with no disposition to boast, cannot charge themselves with idleness or cowardice, whose step has lost something of its elasticity, whose heart and flesh are failing, and who know that the chilliness of evening is around them, and the night is nigh. We never meet but we gaze on vacant places, or places filled with those who seem to have been baptized for the dead. The future will, in this respect, be as the past, and who of us, when May smiles again, or even when autumn is tinging our trees with her golden decay, shall have solved the mystery of death—who of us? It is vain to conjecture. The youth may faint and be weary, and the young man may utterly fall; or the men who are now in the glory and the strength of their meridian life may find their sun go down while it is yet noon; or, what might seem more natural, the aged, having waited long, may at length see the salvation of God. But, brethren, we will not seek to uplift a veil which is beyond our reach. It is enough that we know our time is flying, and our Lord is coming. Let our earnestness increase as our time of service diminishes; because we cannot labour long, let us labour well; as our salvation is nearer than when we believed, let us put off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light; with the excitement of those who are always running towards the goal, and may any moment be near,

let us put a swifter speed into our step; since the form of the Husbandman may be seen when we least expect it, moving up the vineyard towards the place which he has given us to cultivate, let us be found toiling as true servants; and as stewards of the mysteries of Him who at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or at the morning may stand suddenly at our side and say, "Give an account of thy stewardship," let us be found faithful; under shepherds of the flock of the Lord, who has purchased it with His own blood, let us watch and feed the sheep more lovingly, and carry the lambs more tenderly, because we know that soon we must resign the crook and go to that world where the Lord himself shall feed us all, and lead us by living fountains of waters. And now may "the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever!" Amen. (Loud and long-continued applause.)

The Rev. S. MARTIN, the retiring chairman of the Union, in a few fraternal and genial remarks, moved the usual vote of thanks for the address, with a request that the chairman would place it at the disposal of the committee for publication.

The Rev. EDWARD GILES, of Huyton, Lancashire, seconded the motion, which was carried by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN acknowledged the vote, and consented to the publication of the address.

The Rev. G. SMITH read the annual report of the committee, of which the following is an abstract:—

Beloved and Honoured Brethren,—Among the years of the right hand of the Most High which have passed over the churches of this country since the establishment of our Union, no one, perhaps, has proved more important to the interests of truth and freedom than the past year. Our churches have nobly responded to the appeals presented to them by the Bicentenary Committee, called into existence by your agency; and the results have been such as may now evoke devout thanksgivings to the adorable and only Head of the Church. Judging from the contributions already promised and announced, we may reasonably conclude that a quarter of a million of money has been or will be subscribed during the Bicentenary period, over and above the ordinary amount of contribution, to those various denominational institutions and objects which aim at the religious instruction and salvation of our fellow-countrymen. The principles which lie at the foundation of our church polity and Christian teaching have been brought out prominently to view by the discussion to which this particular movement gave birth. The noble productions which it has called forth through the medium of the press have greatly enriched our denominational literature, and will remain to coming ages a monumental proof that the descendants of the Puritan fathers of the seventeenth century were, in the nineteenth century, faithful to the trust committed to them by men of whom the world was not worthy.

Your committee have maintained friendly correspondence with the Congregational churches of America, of our own colonies, and of Scotland, during the year. The question of enlarging the basis of your Union, so as to include the Scottish Congregational churches, and to arrange for an occasional autumnal meeting of the whole body in Edinburgh or Glasgow, has been carefully considered, at the request of the committee of the Scottish Union. The result, however, of the deliberation has been to show the impracticability of the design, and your committee have been compelled to decline the proposal. At the same time, they are most anxious to promote in every possible way the closer union of the churches of England and Scotland. They have, therefore, pleasure in reporting that, in addition to the usual delegation of a ministerial brother from this Union to the annual meeting of the Scottish Union, just held in Dundee, arrangements were made for a visit from the respected treasurer of the Home Missionary Society to the pastors and delegates of our churches north of the Tweed, with a view to encourage their evangelising efforts in Scotland. The meetings were fully attended, and pervaded by an admirable spirit; and the results of the visit of this deputation will, it is hoped, prove permanently beneficial to those Christian communities who have so long borne a consistent testimony for the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ and its independence of governmental support and secular control.

At the recent annual meeting of the Congregational Union of Ireland, held in Dublin, your committee was represented by the Rev. W. Tarbotton, the Secretary of the Irish Evangelical Society and Congregational Home Missions.

Fully participating the joy felt by the whole nation on the occasion of the recent marriage in the Royal Family, and cherishing an undiminished feeling of loyal attachment to the reigning house, your committee presented a respectful address of congratulation to the Queen, and one also to the Prince of Wales, on the occasion of the marriage of his Royal Highness, both of which addresses have been graciously received and acknowledged.

Your committee have been urged to take some part in recent demonstrations on the subject of American slavery, but, after maturely considering the matter, they deemed it right to decline any further action at present, unless so instructed by an assembly of the Union. The feelings and convictions of the Congregational churches of this country on behalf of freedom, and in opposition to the enormous wickedness of slavery, are well known and undoubted. This Union has repeatedly placed on record its detestation of this great evil, and in times of calmness, when the voice of reason and religion was likely to be heard, it has again and again appealed to the Christian churches of America to aim at entire abolition of slavery. No change has come over our minds in relation to this frightful evil, but its contemplated abolition is now so mixed up with political motives and combinations, and so intermixed with exasperated feelings arising out of the horrors of war, that your committee felt themselves unable to adopt any measures beyond those already indicated, without

incurring the danger of committing you to views and expressions which would not meet with unanimous concurrence.

At the last autumnal meeting the undertaking of your committee in relation to Congregational worship in Paris was submitted to you, and obtained your approval. They have now to report that they have secured the lease of the chapel in the Rue Royale formerly used by our Wesleyan brethren; that it has been thoroughly repaired and remodelled; and that, being duly authorised by the Government for English Congregational worship, it was opened on Thursday, the 19th February last, amidst encouraging and promising circumstances.

Your committee are happy to report that your publications of tracts, church-records, and other works, continue to be called for, though in moderate demands.

At your last autumnal meeting, the whole subject of the distress in the cotton districts received a long and sorrowful consideration. A committee was soon afterwards formed in London to act in harmony with the Lancashire Congregational Committee, and it is gratifying to know that the committee have collected about 4,000*l.*, and that through their united endeavours a sum greatly in advance of this has been employed in promoting the comfort of our Christian brethren connected with Congregational churches in the north, while even still larger contributions have been made by individual donations and congregational collections to the general fund.

The committee have pleasure in reporting that the pastors and deacons of our churches in Liverpool have invited you to visit them a second time, and to hold your next autumnal meeting in that town in the month of October. Your committee have applied to the brethren in Hull to arrange for your reception in that town in the year 1864. They have kindly complied with the request, and presented a cordial and unanimous invitation, which your committee have accepted on your behalf.

Your committee were very anxious to secure the services of our beloved friend the Rev. Dr. Tidman as your chairman for the next year, and urgently invited him to allow himself to be nominated for the office. After much careful consideration, he felt compelled to decline the proposition, on account of his official engagements with the London Missionary Society. It affords your committee pleasure to announce that the Rev. Joshua C. Harrison has consented to serve in that capacity.

Thus, beloved brethren, have your committee reviewed, in the briefest form, their proceedings for the past year. They cannot, however, close this retrospect without reminding you that during that period three honoured and distinguished men, who have filled the office of chairman, have fallen asleep in Jesus. The names of Burnet, and Leitch, and Bennett, will be held in grateful remembrance, as those of brethren who served their generation faithfully and efficiently, according to the will of God. The fathers, where are they? We, too, are following on in the course they trod. Be it ours to emulate the holy zeal and manly consecration to Christ which they displayed, to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It is our comfort under such inevitable losses to know that while good men die the principles they held survive, and that the Lord and Saviour of the church liveth evermore.

The Rev. Dr. BROWN, of Cheltenham, in moving the adoption of the report, with the list of committee and officers for the ensuing year, said that he was glad to see appended to the resolution a clause giving to the committee the power to add to their number, if they should think proper, the names of ministers in the country. Owing to the facilities of railway communication, it was easy to obtain access to the metropolis, and the presence of the country element in the councils of the Union would prevent anything like cliques. (Hear, hear.) He was highly gratified at the results of the Bicentenary celebration, the more so as he was rather laughed at for having suggested at the autumnal meeting in Birmingham that they might expect to raise a quarter of a million sterling. (Cheers.) The committee had decided not to submit a resolution on the subject of slavery; but in the absence of such a formal expression of opinion he was glad that the chairman had given utterance to sentiments with regard to that wicked institution which must receive the assent of every one of the assembly. (Cheers.)

GEORGE BAINES, Esq., of Leicester, seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The SECRETARY introduced the Rev. Julian Sturtevant, D.D., of New York, as a deputation from the Congregational Union in America. The Chairman shook hands with Dr. Sturtevant in the name of the assembly.

The Rev. R. VAUGHAN, D.D., then came forward and read an interesting paper on the Bicentenary effort. He commenced by saying that now the Bicentenary celebration was a chapter in the history of the denomination, it was desirable that some final judgment upon it should be placed on their records. In the first place, on a calm review they were satisfied that the thing done was the right thing to do. They said now as in the beginning that as English Nonconformists they found men belonging to their spiritual ancestry among the sufferers of 1662. The oft-repeated objection that some or even most of those good men held opinions which they, their children, had more or less discarded, was futile and childish. Society was a growth, and principles were a growth, and all growth supposed a measure of difference along with a measure of identity. The English constitution was a growth, and if the English Church had not grown with it, it was because she had been checked and repressed by artificial means. Legislation in that quarter always tended towards a stereotyped fixedness. Too often had it been felt that to cede anything to truth or common sense would be to cede something to an opponent—(laughter)—and so the concession had not been made. But iron-bound as was that Church by legislation, her members had shown, and were

showing, that they were not to be bound in thought by such means. Not long since a monument was erected in Oxford to the memory of Protestant martyrs; but where was the party in the English Church at the present day who had a right to rear such a monument on the plea of being wholly at one with those martyrs on ecclesiastical questions? The good men who suffered in 1662 gave us the germ of the true doctrine concerning liberty of conscience. The only difference between them and us was that we saw more clearly than they did what that liberty should include. In the second place, he observed, that we not only accounted the thing done to have been a right thing to do, but we regarded the manner in which it was done as the right manner. When their purpose was first announced it was met by the—he would say insolent—assertion that they had no right to attempt any such celebration—the ejected of 1662 being no ancestors of theirs. To be told that in defiance of their household traditions, of all the points of identity between past and present, and of the notorious fact that hundreds of their churches could be traced upwards to the labours of the ejected ministers, was to be told that which might have gone far to justify some warmth of feeling, and might have been pleaded in extenuation of some rashness and readiness of retort. He was devoutly thankful, however, that they had no such fault to confess. It had, on the contrary, been given to their brethren, to acquit themselves generally with a temper and ability which contrasted honourably with their opponents. In fact, the higher order of Churchmen knew the case to be a bad one, and that nothing was to be gained to their cause by meddling with it. Hence, they left the discussion to be carried on by the sort of men who often rushed into dangers which wise heads knew how to avoid. (Cheers and laughter.) The complaint had been that they had been eager to denounce the Church as a body. He admitted that they had expressed themselves as unable to comprehend how formularies and articles intended to be defined in a certain manner could be honestly subscribed with an unfeigned assent and consent by men whose views were often so notoriously different. That perplexity they still felt, but they had not presumed to judge any man. Moreover, they could not forget that the clergy of the Established Church had impeached the integrity of each other in a manner which the Nonconformists had not ventured to do. The Doctor then passed in review the results of the controversy in the information which it had been the means of diffusing, the strength it had given to Nonconformity, and the means of spiritual instruction which it had put into operation. Having enumerated some of the statistical results of the movement, in the erection of chapels and so forth, and having referred to the principal doctrines which they as Nonconformists and Independents desired to set forth, he alluded, in conclusion, to the proposal to build a memorial hall. The committee upon that subject were the members of the Congregational Library Committee and a number of gentlemen on the Bicentenary Executive Committee. Little, however, had been done at present in the way of carrying out the proposal, owing chiefly to the difficulty of finding a suitable site for the building. Negotiations to purchase property had been opened in several instances, but partly from defective tenure and partly from the enormous prices asked, none of those negotiations had yet been successful. It was felt to be better to submit to a little delay than to go to work in haste and spoil it. (Hear, hear.) On the whole, the year 1862 had been a memorable year in the history of English Independency. It was a great law of Providence that what centuries had done centuries only could undo. At present our surprise should be, not at the slowness with which great principles were leavening churches and nations, but rather at the rapid manner in which they were diffusing themselves. Christian men had always known how to work and to wait; especially should they do so in such circumstances as theirs, feeling well assured that in many things the heresy of to-day was destined to become the truth of to-morrow. (Cheers.)

The Rev. GEORGE SMITH apprised the assembly of the serious, and supposed fatal illness of the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, who was nevertheless joyful and happy in his spirit,—and suggested the propriety of some brother offering prayer, with special reference to their honoured and beloved father in Christ.

The Rev. JOHN ALEXANDER was requested to lead the devotions of the brethren, which he did in the most earnest and suitable manner.

Mr. S. MORLEY moved the best acknowledgments of the meeting to the Rev. Dr. Vaughan for the paper just read, with a request that he would place it at the disposal of the committee for publication, and a hearty expression of thankfulness for the varied services he had rendered to the entire Bicentenary movement. Mr. Morley thought it was most appropriate that the man who had so nobly inaugurated the movement at Birmingham should have had the task of summing up the history of it, which he had performed so admirably. It was a singular circumstance that Dr. Stanley's letter to the Bishop of London in reference to Subscription should have appeared so soon after the celebration of the Bicentenary. Whether there subsisted any connection between the two he could not say; but of this he was sure, that many Dissenters had come to understand their principles better than they did before the attention of the public had been called to the events of 1662. He had been assured in the course of a recent visit to Scotland by the ministers and elders of the Free

Church that the principle of Voluntaryism was making great and rapid progress in the minds of Free Churchmen. It would not be worth while to recall the memory of the past, unless the Nonconformists of the present day were prepared to prove their principles to be of practical worth now, in the spirit of the noble address which had just been delivered from the chair. (Cheers.) The preaching specified by the president was exactly the kind of preaching wanted in these days. We must make the people see and feel that our principles have about them a living power. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. LEGGE, of Reading, seconded the resolution, and spoke in high and warm terms, both of the chairman's address and of Dr. Vaughan's paper. The difficulties and oppositions which the Bicentenary movement met with at the outset, had greatly served to give it both celerity and dignity.

The resolution was very cordially adopted.

The Rev. H. ALLON nominated the Rev. J. C. Harrison to the chairmanship of the Union for the ensuing year, and said he was sure there was no man that the metropolitan brethren would more delight to honour by placing in the chair. The position of chairman of the Union was one of no small responsibility, as well as of usefulness; and increasingly so. (Hear, hear.) He rejoiced in such addresses as that to which they had listened this morning. (Hear, hear.) He could honestly say that for the last two or three years he had got more stimulus and refreshment from the addresses than from any other single influence in the course of the year. (Cheers.) The memory of the two hallowed addresses last year abode with them still—(cheers)—and he was satisfied that it would be long before they forgot the admirable addresses which they had heard to-day. (Cheers.) If it were only for these addresses it would be worth while to hold these assemblies, and the position of chairman would be one of responsibility to all the Congregational churches. One could not but rejoice in the growth of the Union itself, because it showed that the value of the Union was being appreciated throughout the length and breadth of the land. No word of objection to it was now heard in any quarter. He hoped that the suggestion respecting the admission of the representatives of county associations to the committee would be acted upon, because it was desirable to have the widest possible constituency.

Mr. E. D. GODDARD, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, seconded the nomination of Mr. Harrison to the chair, and it was unanimously agreed to.

The Rev. J. C. HARRISON briefly expressed his willingness to accede to the request of his brethren.

Mr. E. BAINES, M.P., removed the following resolution:—

That this assembly has heard with sorrow and indignation that notwithstanding the protest which Christians throughout Europe have made against the persecution on the part of the Spanish Government, their brethren Matamoros, Alhama and Trigo have recently been sentenced by a final judgment of the tribunal to nine and six years' imprisonment. At the same time they rejoice to learn that active measures are still being taken to obtain the liberty of their beloved brethren, and they offer their earnest prayer to the Supreme Ruler of Events that the depositions now on their way from many lands to meet in Madrid, and to present their united memorial before the Queen of Spain, may prove successful, and that Spain may soon have not only the possession but the unrestricted use of the Word of God.

There was good reason to believe that the three persons mentioned in the resolution were simple and devout Bible Christians—true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who were influenced by a sincere and pure zeal in their endeavours to bring others to a knowledge of that truth by which they had been liberated from ancient bonds, and which had given to them high and immortal hopes. (Hear, hear.) The old charge had been made against them that they had engaged themselves in political intrigue; but there was not the smallest amount of truth in the allegation. See the position which the converts to the Gospel occupied in Spain—a country double-dyed in superstition. They were of course anxious to communicate with those who sympathised with them, and their correspondence being of necessity secret, a colour was given to acts which were of a most truly Christian character, and which were necessitated by the intolerance of the laws under which they lived. Matamoros and Alhama had already been imprisoned for two years, and were now condemned to spend nine years more amidst degrading associations, purely for the crime of having received the truths of the Bible; and being a refined and educated man, the infliction of such a sentence was the more severe. English Christians could not help feeling this to be cruel, hateful, dreadful; but yet there were reasons for hoping that good might arise out of the evil. Two countries which had been united with Spain in history had undergone delightful changes in respect of religious toleration—Austria and Belgium; and even now there was a semi-progress in Spain, and some of the papers had advocated the rights of conscience in the cases of Matamoros and Alhama. He rejoiced to know that a deputation, composed of Catholics as well as Protestants, was now on its way to Madrid to appeal to the Queen to set aside the sentence of the tribunals upon these innocent and excellent men, and he earnestly hoped they would be successful in their Christian endeavour, and that their presence in Madrid might have the effect of directing attention to the Gospel, for which Matamoros and Alhama and Trigo were suffering.

Mr. T. E. PARSONS, in seconding the resolution, stated that Matamoros was twenty-seven years of age, of noble birth and connections, and that both Alhama and Trigo, also belonging to the upper class of society, had wives and families who were in deep affliction on account of the trials which had come upon them for the Gospel's sake. He also spoke in terms of gratitude to the interest which Sir

Robert Peel had displayed on behalf of Matamoros and Alhama. British Christians owed their thanks to him. (Cheers.) The Evangelical Alliance ought also to be remembered in connection with this subject. It had made powerful and persistent, and in some instances very successful efforts in behalf of Christian liberty. (Hear.) The resolution which he had pleasure in seconding, embodied the great principle for which Nonconformists had always contended—the right of private judgment—and he was sure that it would commend itself to the assembly.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

The Rev. J. DAVIS, one of the secretaries of the Alliance, was to have supported it, but time would not allow for further speeches upon the subject.

The Rev. J. W. RICHARDSON proposed that the autumnal meeting of the Union for 1864 be held in the town of Hull. Much importance now attached to the autumnal meetings of the Union, and the towns visited had been invariably blessed. Hull being his native place, he was desirous that it should possess some of the benefits which other towns had received.

The Rev. J. SIBREE, of Hull, seconded the motion, and said that the brethren would be cordially received.

The resolution passed unanimously.

The Rev. J. C. HARRISON and Mr. MORLEY gave an interesting account of their recent visit to Scotland as the representatives of the English to the Scottish Union; and the Rev. W. Tarbotton of his visit to the Irish Union.

The Rev. E. CONDER, of Leeds, moved:—

That this assembly views with satisfaction the labours of the English Congregational Chapel-Building Society during the ten years of its existence, and, believing that the work of chapel-extension must still be carried on for the diffusion of the Gospel, recommends that it be an instruction to the new committee to convene a conference on chapel-building, with a view to the carrying on of the work.

There certainly ought to be commodious, handsome, and spacious places of worship, every way worthy to represent the Church of Christ, and therefore he heartily rejoiced in the share which the Congregational body had taken of late years in the work of chapel-building. He trusted that when the proposed conference should be called it would earnestly consider this practical point—the sort of places best suited for public worship. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. J. KENNEDY, of Stepney, in seconding the resolution, related a portion of his own experience in the work of chapel-erection on which he and his people had entered, and besought those who might be now or at any future time similarly engaged not to permit the introduction of any sort of symbolism in the architecture. He greatly rejoiced in the work which both the English and the London Chapel-Building Societies had been enabled to do, and believed that a large field was still open to them; and there would be no lack of means if all the rich men of the denomination would follow the example of a few of their brethren; and if means were devised to obtain the subscriptions of all who were disposed to give. Much might be done by even a poor congregation if all were engaged in the work. His people at Stepney were far from rich, only three had given 700*l.* each, three 500*l.*, and several 100*l.*; and the larger part of the contributions had been received from policemen, dock-labourers, and such like, who only earned from 1*8s.* to 20*s.* a-week.

Mr. EUSEBIUS SMITH did not hesitate to say that he believed the work of chapel-building, looked at calmly, in all its influences, present and remote, was of all others the most important work in which the denomination was engaged—(Hear, hear)—for this reason—that its object is to create new congregations and churches, which might be compared to the opening of new fountains, from the streams of which all their other organisations were likely to be replenished and invigorated. Happily, no arguments were now needed to convince men of the importance of this work, but there was great need for more to be said, in order to touch that wealth to which Mr. Kennedy had alluded, which in a very inadequate degree had been brought to bear on this important movement. The annual income of both the societies was scarcely 10,000*l.* a year, and there were urgent calls for help which could not be met. The work required to be done could not be accomplished without much larger contributions; and he felt sure, if the matter were seriously considered by those who had the means in their hands, that great progress would speedily be made.

The resolution was adopted.

The Rev. J. H. WILSON closed the service with prayer.

The ministers and delegates to the number of from three to four hundred congregated at the Bridge House Hotel at dinner at three o'clock. At the close of the repast the National Anthem was sung with much spirit, and Dr. Sturtevant, from America, delivered a brief but effective speech, expressive of the high pleasure and satisfaction he had derived from the proceedings of the day, and of the relief which had come over his mind since his arrival in England in respect of the political relations of the two nations. He was satisfied that there was less reason to fear war between them than he had apprehended. The Christians of both nations he could see were identical in their feelings and desires, even in respect of slavery. The matters respecting which they might be found to differ he would not then advert to, but intended to take every opportunity that presented itself during his stay in England to supply correct information regarding the great questions involved in the war between the North and the South.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The fifty-ninth anniversary of this society was celebrated on Wednesday in Exeter Hall. The proceedings commenced at eleven o'clock, by which hour the large room was well filled. The Earl of Shaftesbury, as usual, occupied the chair, and was supported on the platform by the following prelates, noblemen, and gentlemen:—Archbishop of York, Bishop of Carlisle, Bishop of Cashel, Bishop of Melbourne, Bishop of Mauritius, Hon. and Rev. Leland Noel, Hon. Henry Noel, Hon. A. Kinnaird, M.P., S. Gurney, Esq., M.P., Lord Charles Russell, Dean of Dromore, General Lawrence, John Henderson, Esq., Rev. Dr. Tidman, Rev. J. Stoughton, Rev. George Smith, Rev. C. Vince, John Bocket, Esq., treasurer, John Finch, Esq., &c. A letter from the Bishop of London was read regretting his inability to attend.

The Rev. CHARLES JACKSON offered prayer and read the 55th chapter of Isaiah.

The Rev. S. B. BERGE read the report of the committee for the past year. It said the year had had its peculiar features of encouragement and responsibility. The committee had to announce a diminished income, but they did that in common with other large religious societies, whose resources had been affected by the distress in Lancashire. In France the labours of colporteurs had yielded smaller results than in previous years. In some localities strenuous efforts had been made to arrest the work of circulation. The pulpit and the press had been employed against Protestantism; the fears of the superstitious, especially in the rural districts, had been worked upon; and the Bible had been branded as the symbol of anarchy and misfortune. The total circulation in France was now raised to 5,000,000 copies. The circulation of the year in Belgium was 4,749 volumes, making the issues since 1835, 272,000. In Holland the two antagonists of the society were Popery and Rationalism, and the work of distribution had been opposed by both in the last year. The issues from the depot at Amsterdam within the year amounted to 21,151 copies. No pleasurable reference, it was observed, could be made to Austria. Every effort had been made to induce the Austrian Government formally to allow the introduction of the Bible, but without effect. The agent of the society had had frequent interviews with official persons, and respectful memorials had been addressed to the Minister of State in whose department the matter was; but the Government had maintained a long and vexatious silence. The circulation in Denmark during the last year was 16,130 copies; in Norway, 19,582; in Sweden, 93,000; in Russia, 19,500. The committee had endeavoured to prosecute their labours in Italy with all the vigour and appliances at their command; but the results in the past year were not equal to those announced in the last report. There were extreme difficulty in obtaining men duly qualified by piety, zeal, and prudence for the duties of colportage. During this year the issues in Italy amounted to 27,000 Bibles and Testaments. The number of colporteurs employed was twenty-nine, and their labours embraced Northern, Central, and Southern Italy, and the island of Sicily. There was a bright side to the picture of Italy. Some of the priesthood there were arguing in favour of the free circulation of the Scriptures, and the utterances of a free press and other causes gave assurance that a power was at work which would eventually ensure a wide diffusion of the Scriptures. The important depot at Malta provided for Bible distribution in Africa, Egypt, and Syria, as well as in Malta itself, and nearly 9,000 copies had gone forth from it in the past year. A valuable report had been received from the society's agent at Constantinople, containing evidence of success as regarded the circulation of the Scriptures. The agent declared that a careful retrospect of the year was in all respects well fitted to encourage the hearts of those who longed to see Mahomedanism supplanted by the religion of the Cross. The circulation of the year amounted to 16,046 copies. In Greece the use of the Bible was permitted in all the national schools, and adopted in nearly one-half; and this, also, was a cause for congratulation. The issues of the year in that country amounted to 1,396. Proceeding to India, the report said the work of the society there was necessarily dependent on the co-operation of missionaries and native converts, and in proportion as these multiplied would there be additional facilities for diffusing the Scriptures. There was now apparent from year to year an increased circulation of the Scriptures, combined with encouraging testimony to its good effects. The issue of the year at Calcutta were 28,500; at Allahabad, 13,000; at Madras, 76,000; at Bombay, 9,160. The returns from Ceylon were not yet complete; but the entire circulation of Ceylon in the past year could not be less than 137,000 copies. In China there were some features of progress and improvement. The issues of the year at Shanghai were 35,190 copies, chiefly Testaments; at Canton the number was 9,000, and at Hong-Kong, 9,341. As regards the South Sea Islands, during the past year the complete Bible in the Tabitian language had been finished and placed at the disposal of the London Missionary Society. The Bible in the language of Samoa had also been completed. The translation of the Scriptures into the language of Savage Island was proceeding satisfactorily, and its translation in the Tongee language had been completed. In the last report it was stated that ample supplies of the Scriptures had been recently despatched to Madagascar. When they arrived the work of distribution immediately commenced, and so numerous and eager were the appli-

cants that within three days nearly 2,000 copies were issued. The society would be prepared promptly to undertake the preparation of any editions of the Scriptures, at whatever cost, which might be required to give effect to the missionary operations now so auspiciously renewed. It was also stated in the last report that a Bible had been forwarded for presentation to the King of Madagascar, accompanied with a letter. The gift was received most favourably, and the volume was in frequent use in the Royal Palace. The following letter of acknowledgment had been received from the king:—

My Lord and Gentlemen,—I have duly received from the Rev. William Ellis the very handsome Bible which you were so good as to send me, with the letter by which it was accompanied. I thank your lordship and the officers of the committee of the great institution over which you preside for the good wishes expressed in your letter towards myself, and for the interest you manifest in the prosperity of my country, as well as for the holy book you have forwarded to me; and more particularly for the generous supply of the sacred Scriptures which you have sent to my people, by many of whom they will be highly prized and carefully read. I desire to ascribe to Almighty God the position which I occupy in Madagascar; and as I believe that nothing will conduce more to the prosperity of my people than a wide extension of Bibles, I shall encourage the most free circulation of the Scriptures throughout Madagascar, and I wish religious teaching and Christian worship to be without hindrance or interruption among all classes of my people.

I am, your sincere friend,

RADAMA II.

With respect to the Southern States of America, it was remarked that previous to the war they drew their supplies of Bibles from New York. When that source of supply was closed by the war, the Bible societies in the Southern States applied to the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society to supply the place of New York, and send the requisite supplies. With this demand the committee felt bound to comply. They sent such supplies as were needed, waiting for more prosperous times for payment; and they hoped that the circulation of the Scriptures would tend to mitigate the fierce passions stirred up by the war. In response to an appeal, the committee had voted 10,000 Bibles and 50,000 Testaments for Virginia, on the understanding that they should be distributed with thorough impartiality as between white and black. These terms had been accepted by the agent of the Virginia Society. The following is a general statement of the transactions of the society during the year:—

The receipts of the year ending March 31, 1863, applicable to the general purposes of the society, have amounted to 84,263*l.*; and the amount received for Bibles and Testaments has been 73,727*l.* 4*s.*; making the total receipts from the ordinary sources of income 157,990*l.* 4*s.*, being 9,693*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* less than in the preceding year. To the above must be added the sum of 703*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* for the Chinese New Testament Fund, and 577*l.* 13*s.* 1*d.* for the special fund for India; making a grand total of 158,750*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* The issues of the society for the year are as follows:—From the depots at home, 1,518,469; from depots abroad, 615,391—total, 2,133,860 copies. The total issues of the society now amount to 43,044,334 copies. The ordinary payments have amounted to 144,946*l.* 7*s.* 1*d.*, and the payments on account of the special funds to 5,592*l.* 13*s.* 8*d.*; making the total expenditure of the year to amount to 150,539*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*, being 5,539*l.* 1*s.* more than in the preceding year. The society is under engagements to the extent of 94,285*l.* 9*s.* 9*d.*

The termination of the report included a congratulatory reference to the agency of the Bible-women, of whom it was said there are 199 now employed.

The CHAIRMAN then rose amid the repeated cheers of the audience, and delivered a brief address. He said that if they ever had reason to rejoice it was because the impost of the income-tax on religious and charitable institutions had been, by the wisdom and justice of the House of Commons, abandoned. (Cheers.) A great deal had been said about taking the taxes off knowledge, but what would they say if Government had imposed a tax upon the circulation of the Holy Scriptures? (Cheers.) But, thank God, that was at an end, and they would be able to carry on their work without that odious tax. The report which had been read had passed over what had been done in South Africa. Now, the society had doubtless done much good there, but South Africa had also done much good in England. The attacks on the Word of God which had proceeded from that quarter had called forth an amount of learning and ability in its defence which had taken him by surprise. It had rejoiced him greatly to see with what unanimity the learned Jewish Rabbis had united with their Christian brethren in defending the integrity of the Pentateuch, and in overthrowing all the ignorant follies of those who would despise the revelation brought to them by the inspired Apostles, when they could only substitute for it the teachings of a mere professor of arithmetic. (Laughter and cheers.) His lordship concluded:—

I say, therefore, that the greater the number of attacks there are upon the Bible, and the more determined and serious they are, the more must you meet them by increasing the issues of copies of the Scriptures. Redouble your issues, and reduce the price of the volumes, for the more your issues are doubled, the more will the book be read; the more the book is read, the more it will be believed; the more it is believed, the more it will be beloved; the more it is beloved, the more it will be defended; and the more it is defended, the more it will fulfil the great and blessed purpose for which God in His almighty goodness gave it to a fallen world. (Loud applause.)

The Archbishop of YORK moved the adoption of the report, and in doing so called attention to the fact that the society had circulated since its commencement 43,000,000 Bibles. Attempts had been made to disturb the Christian mind with regard to the miracles of the Bible. (Cheers.) He at some

length defended the Bible from the attacks that had been made upon it, and contended that with regard to miracles the introduction of Christianity by Christ himself, his doctrines, and the signal spread of the Gospel, were greater miracles than any recorded.

The Earl of HARROWBY seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The Rev. Dr. TIDMAN moved:—

"That this meeting, deeply sensible of the goodness and mercy which have hitherto followed the labours of this society, and trusting still to the same gracious guidance by which its counsels have been thus far matured and its purposes accomplished, desires to engage with renewed activity in the great work of making known God's truth throughout the earth; and, believing that there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed, invites all to earnest prayer and cordial co-operation, that upon each land of darkness the true light may speedily shine, and ignorance and superstition be everywhere replaced by the knowledge of Jehovah as the only true God, and of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour."

It was now twenty years since he had taken part in the anniversary meetings of the Bible Society, and he passed in rapid review the society's operations during that period. The speaker referred to the wondrous change that had taken place in Italy, where now the Bible circulated; in Turkey, where the Word of God has free course; and in India. He had lately received a letter from Dr. Mullens giving a most encouraging account of Bible circulation in our Eastern Empire. His friend Dr. Mullens made a point every ten years of gathering the statistics of the India missions and of the Bible circulation, and he had just printed or prepared for printing a report of the Calcutta Bible Society.

This report was sent to me before it was issued, and he stated that during the last ten years there had been published and circulated in India fourteen translations of the entire Bible, with five other translations of the New Testament, and that there has been published also into seven other languages separate books of the Old and New Testaments. He tells us that the number of books thus circulated in twenty-one different languages has been during the ten years 1,634,940. (Loud cheers.) Now, remember, that during these ten years, there occurred that fearful mutiny which engaged and distracted the attention of all men throughout India, and yet during those ten years this immense number of Bibles in twenty-one different languages of India has been put in circulation. I do not think that that is a bad case. (Hear, hear.)

Then, let them look at China. Twenty years ago, whoever thought of spreading the Bible in China? They had prayed for many a long day that China might be opened; but China was still shut, and it seemed as likely to be shut for another century as it had been for centuries past. But China had been opened, and the Bible was in free circulation there.

All we want is Christian agency to extend it; the people are willing to receive it—eager to receive it—and all we need, therefore, is the multiplication of Christian natives to carry out this great design. And here, my lord, you must allow us who represent missionary societies to claim fellowship with you, and to say that while we are greatly indebted to the Bible Society, that never denies us the help we want, so you must give us your best wishes and earnest prayers, because it is just in proportion as our mission churches flourish, that we can give you a goodly band of faithful teachers and colporteurs to circulate the Word of God throughout the hundred millions in China.

Twenty years ago, an event had just transpired which was more than once that day referred to. France had just taken possession of the little island of Tahiti. Power, under the inspiration of Popery, had triumphed over feebleness, and injustice over liberty. It was a sad, sad day. But, how had that aggression of France operated?

While we must deeply sympathise with the poor queen and her people, who were then robbed of their country and their freedom, the aggression itself neutralised the power that brought that political oppression into operation. The people could not admire that religion which had brought those strangers to deprive them of their right and to take possession of their land. And as it operated in Tahiti, so throughout all the islands in the Pacific, the Frenchman is dreaded, because they think he comes on the errand on which his countrymen went to that ill-fated island. None, therefore, give the Frenchman welcome, and the Romish missionaries, who are chiefly from France, have met with very little success. And then with regard to Tahiti itself. Perhaps your lordship saw a very gloomy account indeed in a popular weekly publication a few weeks ago, in which the state of Tahiti, especially with regard to its chief seaport, Papeete, was represented as in the most awful condition of demoralisation. Now, I do not think, my lord, we should have a very good specimen of the British morals if we were to go to Plymouth and Portsmouth. Papeete happens to be the only port to which all foreigners resort, and I am sorry to say that foreigners, wherever they come from—whether from Britain, America, or France—do not improve the state of the heathen population, whilst they appear to do all they can to demoralise those who profess Christianity. But though the condition of the chief seaport is very sad, let me tell this assembly that after twenty years of French rule, in which Popery, vice, and crime have had their influence, the number of native Christians at this day—I speak of those, my lord, with whom you and I would delight to commune at the table of our Lord Jesus Christ—the number of Christians in church fellowship is one-third greater than it was at the time when Popery was first introduced into the island. (Cheers.)

Twenty years ago the reign of terror had begun in Madagascar. Hundreds and thousands of Christians were in bonds. Some had died by the spear or at the stake, and from that day till August, 1861, this system of terror, cruelty, and oppression continued without mitigation.

During that time more than a hundred—how many none can tell—died either at the stake or by being cast headlong over the deadly precipice, or stoned to death in the capital, or crucified with all the lingering horrors of that cruel death. (Hear, hear.) We must all deplore

those events; but there is one delightful fact arising out of them—though there were at least a hundred martyrs, there was not an apostate. My lord, these are triumphs of Divine power and mercy which are quite peculiar to the history of the Church in modern times. These form a new chapter—the chapter of martyrdom—in the book of modern missionary effort, and we should be thankful when we hear about this old book, with its absurdities and its lost power, that we can see what influence, under the living power of the Spirit of God, is able thus to make men, and thus to make women, dauntless and heroic, in the immediate prospect of an awful death. (Cheers.) But, this reign of terror has passed away. Nearly two years ago, that cruel woman, who seemed to delight in blood, was called to render her account, and she was succeeded, as your lordship knows, by her only child, of whom I may say, that in all that is amiable, right and benevolent—I speak under qualification—the character of Radama the Second is every thing we should wish him to be. (Cheers.) (At this moment, the Bishop of Mauritius entered the hall and took a seat upon the platform. His arrival at this particular moment, when Dr. Tidman was describing events which had taken place in a country so familiar to his lordship, was the signal for a hearty outburst of applause, which having subsided, Dr. Tidman resumed his speech.) I am extremely happy to see the Right Rev. Prelate enter the room just at this particular moment, because I shall call him as a witness. (Loud cheers.) He has been in Madagascar, which I have not; he has seen the king of Madagascar and the native Christians of Madagascar, and he will give you I am sure a very interesting and truthful statement of what he saw. I would not have you suppose from anything I have said that Madagascar is a Christianised country. Oh, no. The character of the native population of Madagascar is exceedingly ignorant, degraded, and vicious, and the power of the Gospel is yet perhaps not extended over more than ten thousand or fifteen thousand of the people, though every mail tells us of the increasing number of Christian inhabitants. But my lord, there are five millions of people or thereabouts in Madagascar, and I therefore rejoice that the Bishop of Mauritius went there with a view to see how, as the representative of the recognised missionary societies of Britain, he could promote the interests of the Gospel and the Kingdom of Christ in that land. (Cheers.)

The Bishop of CARLSLE seconded the resolution, and it was carried unanimously.

The Bishop of MAURITIUS, who was received with loud cheers, said he would just mention one or two facts which were brought under his own personal notice in Madagascar, and which bore on the tenor of the resolution he was called on to support. He did not think that in any sphere of the operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society had the goodness and mercy of God been more graciously manifested than in Madagascar, in the blessings which have been vouchsafed to that kingdom and people.

When I was travelling up the country I took with me a New Testament which had been brought to Mauritius in 1830, and kept carefully there by a planter, who, when he heard I was going to Madagascar, sent it to me. It was very strongly bound. I was asked for that Testament more than a hundred times during my journey, and I lent it until every single leaf in it was loose. I only wish I had that Testament here; it would be a most striking proof of the earnest desire of the simple people in Madagascar to possess the Word of God. I never saw anything like it in all my life. And who were they that borrowed this Testament so often, and used it in this manner? Why some of the very poorest class of slaves. One of these men was so exceedingly earnest that I felt there must be some history connected with his conversion, and I managed through an interpreter to find out the facts of the case, which were these. After the missionaries had been expelled, this man's master, like other Christians, instructed his servants in Christianity. The master was seized and put in prison. He escaped once, but was seized again, and put to a violent death. Consequently this poor man, whenever he thought of Christianity, thought of it as something for which an honoured and beloved master suffered death. If we were to place ourselves in his position,—if we knew that the teacher through whom we had received the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ had gone through all kinds of peril and suffering, and at last sealed his testimony with his blood, what a deep impression would be given to the teachings we might have received of him! I saw the impression first, and I gathered the history afterwards. (Cheers.) When we were about eleven miles from Antananarivo a part of the army of Madagascar met us, and a most thrilling sight it was. The men were attired in the uniforms of British regiments thirty or forty years ago, and the officers wore uniforms chiefly of velvet and blue, but of all shades. We were exceedingly amused at the appearance of these troops, as well we might be. They halted on the side of a hill, and our amusement was kindled into a very deep feeling indeed, when the band struck up "God save the Queen." When the army was dismissed for the night, the young officers who had been giving the word of command, came to me and in broken English said, "Have you brought with you the book of Jesus Christ?" (Hear, hear.) I was very sorry that I was unable to say yes. They entreated me to send down Bibles. There were countrymen who came from about fifteen miles from the capital asking for the same thing—Bibles. I asked them if they would meet me as I came back, and they came several miles to do so, eight men, and eighteen women and children. But still the cry was, "Bibles, Bibles!" One fine-looking man, whose brother had been hurled from the rock, came and brought me his Bible, and asked me to open my English Bible. He then gave me to understand that he had been eighteen years wandering about, and that when he was persecuted, and fleeing for his life, his attention was directed to a chapter in Jeremiah, one of the verses of which is as follows:—"Fear not the king of Babylon, of whom thou art afraid, for I will deliver thee from his hand, and thou shalt return and thy seed with thee, and shalt be at rest, and none shall make thee afraid." "And there they are," said he, pointing to his wife and eight children. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, he showed me six passages of Scripture, and this was just what we find in cases where men will seriously look to the Bible as the Word of God. He had looked for guidance to that Word, and had found it. He looked for comfort to strengthen him, and he found it; and when these men spoke of the Bible, it was with

deep emotion and with tears in their eyes as they referred to the wonderful way in which, in the midst of all their peculiar privations and sorrows, the Word of God spoke peace and comfort to them. (Applause.) I am very thankful to say that there was no need for my making any effort when I went back to Mauritius, for the missionaries whom I met on their way had brought many Bibles with them. But there was a complaint at Tamatave that the Bibles were all sent through, that they were directed to Antananarivo, and nobody dared take the responsibility of opening the cases. I am afraid I rather advised that they should break through one of the cases and get some Bibles for the people there. (Cheers.) Reference is made in the report to the duty incumbent on us of engaging with renewed activity in the great work of making God's truth known throughout the earth. I think also that that is illustrated by what has taken place in Madagascar. There were we in Mauritius listening anxiously for news from that island, but it is closed to us. At length comes the news about the queen's death, and a king ascends the throne to whom nothing seems to give so much pleasure as the prospect of having Christian teachers and those who are willing to do good to his people in any way. I had several conversations with him, and I know the impression which he left on my mind. (Hear, hear.) But, my friends, we don't know how long this state of things may continue. His life is most valuable, and I believe there are very strong reasons why we should earnestly pray that that precious life may be preserved. (Hear, hear.) Then we have the expression here that there yet remaineth much land to be possessed. Now I brought with me a very large map of Madagascar in which I have traced out the part which is known to our missionaries. But there is an immense territory some 800 miles long by 400 miles broad which we do not know. And it is populated all over. I myself counted fourteen villages from one spot. In Antananarivo itself there is an effective work going on. The last time I saw it, an assembly as densely crowded, though not so large as this, was in that city. General Johnston and others went with me to a meeting held in a large building capable of containing, it was estimated, 1,500 people. We went to one door, but could not get in, and then we went to four other doors in succession, but had to come back to the first after all, and in passing through we had to take the greatest care not to tread upon the people. I addressed them on the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. My address was translated by Mr. Ellis, and the effect produced by those passages in which the mercy and love of God in Jesus Christ were set forth was most remarkable: it was shown by a deep sigh from the whole assembly. I never saw anything which reminded me so much of the descriptions we read in the Acts of the Apostles of the first Christians as the Christianity of Madagascar.

The Rev. EMILIUS BAYLEY moved a resolution embodying various votes of thanks, which was seconded by the Rev. CHARLES VINCE, of Birmingham, who related several anecdotes of the good results of circulating the Scriptures.

The Rev. LUKE WISEMAN, of Manchester, in moving the last resolution (a vote of thanks to the chairman), referred with satisfaction to the fact that Archbishop Whately, who had been a noble champion of the Christian faith in this country, had now become one of their Vice-Presidents, and that during the fifty-eight years the Bible Society had been in operation no less than 5,000,000 copies of the Holy Scriptures had been circulated by the society in France alone.

From the year 1504 to 1804, when the Bible Society was begun, the Christian Church, during those three centuries, as far as is known, in all countries and languages, had managed to get altogether about 4,000,000 copies of the Word of God. Now, the Bible Society alone, in the course of its brief history, has done, in France only, more than the whole Christian Church had been enabled to do in the three centuries before the time of the Bible Society's formation. And you see the same thing in regard to Ireland. The number of copies of the Word of God circulated in Irish vernacular has been about 4,000,000. We have done more for the vernacular of the Irish than was done before by the Christian Church for three centuries in the matter of the number of the copies of the Word of God circulated. We have heard the issue of the Bible Society stated this morning at something over 2,000,000; it was a million and a-half in the preceding year, and the same in the year before that; so that this one society has been the means of distributing in the course of the last three years more copies of the Word of God than the whole Christian Church had been the means of distributing for three hundred years previously. Therefore we have cause to thank God and take courage for the grand work which we have been permitted to do.

The Bishop of MELBOURNE supported the motion, which was carried with acclamation. The Earl of SHAFTESBURY briefly responded, and the assembly dispersed at three o'clock.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

The members of the London Committee, together with a large number of delegates from the Country Unions, assembled, as usual, in the Lecture-hall, at the Jubilee Building, Old Bailey, on Thursday morning, under the presidency of Samuel Morley, Esq. The subject of Conference was "The Extension of Sunday-schools among the Upper and Lower Classes of Society." After an address from the chairman, Mr. John Smith read an admirable paper introducing the discussion. Mr. W. H. Groser, Mr. Morris, Mr. D. Pratt, Mr. E. Ridley, Mr. Hartley, Rev. J. P. Chown, Rev. S. Keed, Mr. Cathbertson, Mr. H. Lee, Mr. Watson, Mr. W. Gover, and many other gentlemen took part in the proceedings, which were well sustained to the close.

The evening meeting took place in Exeter Hall. Long before six o'clock that large edifice was filled to overflowing with the teachers and friends of Sunday-schools, and hundreds were unable to gain admission. The platform was occupied with ministers and gentlemen of all evangelical denominations,

gathered from many parts of the country as well as of the metropolis. After the singing of a hymn and prayer, Henry Lee, Esq., of Salford, in the absence of the President, the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, M.P.—who felt obliged to be in his place in the House of Commons to vote upon the Prison Ministers Bill—was voted to the chair, and, after making a few brief remarks,

W. H. WATSON, Esq., the senior secretary of the Union, read the report which had been adopted by the annual meeting of members. It commenced by a reference to the late conference at Paris, attended on behalf of the Union by Mr. Charles Reed. In the Paris schools there were 3,000 children. Sunday-schools were rapidly increasing in Paris and some of the larger towns in France. The report then went on to describe the progress of Sunday-schools in America and in the colonies, and made special reference to the general convention held last year, which has been productive of great good. The country unions exhibit considerable activity. Reports have been received from 120 unions, and 71 visits have been paid. The sales at the repositories have amounted during the year to 17,064*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.*, showing a decrease on the year of 186*l.* The sales of the present year are of a more satisfactory character. The committee have resolved to establish a Scripture Museum, and solicit donations of objects tending to illustrate the Scriptures. The income of the benevolent fund has been 2,011*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.*, and the expenditure has amounted to 2,189*l.* 4*s.* 11*d.* during the year. 329 lending libraries have been granted at a sum below the retail price of 339*l.* The schools thus assisted contained 72,763 scholars, of whom 48,782 were Scripture-readers. The number of Sunday-schools in the metropolis is about 200,000, or 1 in 15 of the population; while in some parts of the country 1 in 5 of the population are Sunday-schoolers; or, to put the case in another form, two-thirds of the youthful population of London are destitute of the advantages which Sunday-school instruction has been found to yield. In reply to a circular sent out by the committee for subscriptions to the Lancashire district, the sum of 4,000*l.* had been received from the scholars belonging to the schools in connexion with the Union.

Mr. E. S. ROGERS, of Manchester, as the representative of the Lancashire teachers and scholars, gave expression to most cordial thanks for the generous efforts which had been made by their fellow-teachers and scholars all over the land in their behalf. It was supposed that possibly 1,000*l.* might have been subscribed, but no one ever dreamed that there would have been sent to them in money and clothes 5,200*l.* By this means many had been kept from actual pauperism and death, and hundreds of sad hearts made to rejoice.

The Rev. R. PARNELL, incumbent of St. Stephen's, Bow, moved the first resolution:—

That the teachers and friends of Sunday-schools now assembled, in reviewing the proceedings of the committee during the last year, desire to express their devout and humble thanks to the Father of all mercies, who has enabled them to labour so successfully, in the aid granted to schools in the British colonies and in foreign lands—in the assistance yielded in the season of extreme distress to the teachers and scholars in the cotton-manufacturing districts, and in the guidance and encouragement given to the teachers of our own land. Especially would they recognise the Divine mercy which attended the recent general convention of Sunday-school teachers from its commencement to its close, and earnestly pray that its results may be seen in the increased and still more enlightened attention given to the training the youth of the whole world in the fear of the Lord.

The statement of the report, he said, had filled his mind with grateful wonder and surprise, for he had no idea that the Union was so extensively aiding schools abroad and in the colonies as well as at home. It was most cheering to hear of 33,000 Sabbath-schools in France, and that the system was taking root in other parts of the continent. It was cheering also to hear of contributions having come from the schools in far distant lands for the relief of teachers and scholars in Lancashire, presenting a beautiful picture of the only Catholic Church, and of the deep sympathy between all the members of the one body. He looked upon the present noble meeting as one of the most interesting of all assemblies now being convened in Exeter Hall, because it was mainly composed of actual workers in the vineyard, and because, moreover, he was himself an old Sabbath-school teacher.

The Rev. CHARLES STOVEL, in a fervid speech, seconded the resolution, which was put to the meeting, and immediately carried. Another hymn having been sung,

The Rev. BENJAMIN FIELD moved the second resolution in a speech of solemn exhortation:—

That this meeting has heard with deep regret the statements made by the committee in the report of the very large proportion of the youthful population of the metropolis which is still outside the Sunday-school, and thus deprived of the moral and spiritual advantages which might there be enjoyed. That the influence which the metropolis necessarily exerts on other parts of the kingdom, and even on foreign countries, renders it of vast importance that its religious character should be fully sustained. That the attention of the ministers, officers, and members of Christian churches be called especially to this subject, and that they be respectfully but earnestly invited to consider, in co-operation with the teachers, the best means for bringing the whole youthful population of London under the influence of Sunday-school instruction.

The resolution was seconded by the Rev. J. P. CHOWN, of Bradford, in a speech of some length, which evoked much enthusiasm.

Mr. WATSON said that there were many other gentlemen on the platform who would be glad to speak, but the time was gone, and he therefore moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, which was seconded by Mr. GROSER, and the proceedings closed with a hymn and the doxology at half-past nine o'clock.

LONDON CITY MISSION.

The 28th anniversary meeting of this society was held in Exeter-hall on Friday morning, the chair being occupied by Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, and subsequently by Mr. Roberts.

The Secretary, the Rev. John Garwood, read the report. The number of missionaries sent out by the society during the year was stated to be 380; the number of domiciliary visits paid, 2,012,169, showing an increase on the preceding year of 32,716; copies of the Scriptures distributed, 9,771; tracts, 2,970,527; the outdoor services numbered 4,350; the number of communicants, 1,483; persons restored to church communion, 247; families induced to commence family worship, 619; drunkards reclaimed, 1,013; unmarried couples induced to marry, 366; fallen women restored to their homes, or otherwise rescued, 403; shops closed on Sunday, 203; children sent to schools, 8,726; adults visited who died, 6,791. The receipts of the society from all sources amounted to 36,761*l.*, being a decrease of 388*l.* as compared with last year. The expenditure of the society during the year was 38,491*l.*, being an increase on the last year of 635*l.* The receipts for the Disabled Missionaries Fund were 368*l.*, and the expenditure 385*l.* The committee conclude their report by appealing to the friends of the society not only for increased pecuniary effort, but also for increased prayer. Never in the history of the society have the applications for employment as missionaries been so numerous as during the past year. Instead of districts remaining vacant for want of men, as was the case for so many years, men have now to be refused because there are no funds to support them.

The CHAIRMAN, in the course of his opening speech, said he could bear the strongest testimony to the catholicity of the society. The great problem whether it was possible for men holding different views of church government and church discipline to work together in sending forth missionaries had been solved in the most satisfactory manner. (Applause.) They had worked together in the most harmonious manner, and he had never seen a single case in which Churchmen had been ranged on one side and Dissenters on the other. (Hear, hear.)

The Earl of SHAFTESBURY, in moving the adoption of the report, expressed his sympathy with the operations of the society, and his admiration of the principles of an association which had been so beneficial both to the temporal and spiritual interests of a large part of the destitute portion of the people of this great metropolis. The very working of the society was a proof of the truth of Christianity. The mission showed also the aggressive character of the Christian religion. Christianity was not only a lofty sentiment to be nourished at home, but a religion which went forth among the masses, and out of conditions of vice and crime and wretchedness educes purity, love, and happiness. (Cheers.) Attached as he was to the Church of England, he thought there was an imperative necessity for the abnormal efforts of the City Mission.

I have ever been of opinion that, even in the Church of England, the two great principles—the Establishment principle and the Voluntary principle—must be combined. The Establishment principle is necessary, in my opinion, to give fixity; but the Voluntary principle is necessary to give movement and life. (Applause.) You must have irregularity as well as regularity. You have a regular army; but it would be worth very little if you had not irregular troops also. All our operations lead to the same conclusion. If you go to all the dens and alleys of this metropolis—if you, by enlightening the ignorance of the people by imparting the Gospel, by reaching men's hearts, and proving to them that knowledge is truth, and bringing home to them the Gospel of Christ, and that blessed Name by which alone we can be saved,—you are doing everything to contribute to the permanence and the welfare of the Church of Christ in those congregations where the Word is faithfully preached, and the sacraments rightly administered. If that be true, the Church as established comes in for her share; and I am satisfied, that by the operations of the London City Mission, hundreds of thousands will be added to the Church of England as established in this realm. Even, then, as a Churchman, I rejoice in your operations (applause), which are doing good to the Establishment to which I belong. But put that aside. All distinctive establishments sink into insignificance compared with the one great and necessary effort to preach the doctrine of Christ crucified to every creature upon the earth, or that should be born into this habitable world. I love the 'speciality of your operations; I think you have shown great sagacity, great wisdom, great judgment. It is impossible for me to follow in detail all the various items mentioned in that most interesting report. Who can be otherwise than struck when we hear of the operations of the London City Mission as directed to policemen, to cabmen, to boatmen—as directed to Asiatics, to Germans, to Europeans of all countries? Who can be indifferent to the services it has rendered to those who have attended the services in the theatres—who can be indifferent to its great and essential open-air services? Let me tell you, that of all the operations in which we have been engaged for the spreading of Christian truth for the consolation, and comfort, and instruction of the people, I believe there has been no one that has been so greatly blessed, which has produced such lasting fruit, and which has so generally tended to civilise the large masses of the people, as the open-air services which have been instituted. (Applause.)

His lordship then incidentally alluded to Bishop Colenso's recent book, and having in strong terms condemned it, adverted in detail to the operations of the mission, and concluded by making an earnest appeal on its behalf.

The Rev. E. BAYLEY seconded the resolution. The next resolution was moved by the Rev. H. ALLON, and seconded by the Rev. S. MINTON. The subse-

quent speakers were the Rev. F. Tucker, Mr. C. Robinson, Mr. J. Maxwell, and Mr. Jenkinson, and the proceedings terminated by the singing of the Doxology.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

The sixty-fourth anniversary of this society was celebrated at Exeter Hall on Friday evening. There was a very large attendance, and on the platform there was a goodly array of ministers of various denominations. The chair was occupied, in the absence of Sir F. Crossley, Bart., M.P., by John Gurney Hoare, Esq., the treasurer of the society. The proceedings commenced at half-past six o'clock by singing and prayer.

The CHAIRMAN, in alluding to the absence of Sir F. Crossley, said that few men had done more for the moral and spiritual as well as for the temporal welfare of their fellow-men than the hon. baronet. The friends of the Religious Tract Society unfeignedly regretted the absence of such a man from their annual meeting. (Cheers.) Adverting to the fact that this was the sixty-fourth anniversary of the society, and that most if not all of its first friends had passed away from earth, he said that that thought should stimulate all to increased exertions for the benefit of their fellow men, and to constant prayer for the blessing of Almighty God to rest on their association. Great things had been done by the society, and it might anticipate a future career of honour and usefulness. Every one of its publications contained the truth as it is in Jesus, and the chief point with the conductors of the institution, was to state fully and clearly the leading doctrines of salvation, keeping clear of all subordinate questions. The operations of the society during the past year had possessed features of unusual interest. Advantage had been taken of the Great Exhibition to circulate in large numbers tracts and handbills. Large quantities of tracts and books had been distributed among both of the contending armies in America, and no fewer than 10,000 books and 300,000 tracts had been given away in the cotton districts during the year. (Cheers.)

Dr. G. H. DAVIS, instead of reading a report, stated the leading facts in the course of an interesting speech. The following is a brief summary:—

Publications.—During the year ending March 31, 1863, the society published 55 new tracts, and a packet of 8 book-tracts; 28 books, including a new edition of *Howe's Works*, by H. Rogers, Esq.; and a complete answer to Dr. Colenso's attack upon the Pentateuch, by the Rev. T. R. Birks; 5 periodicals,—the "Leisure Hour," the "Sunday at Home," the "Tract Magazine," the "Child's Companion," and the "Cottage"; and various miscellaneous publications, making a total of 410.

Circulation.—The number of publications issued from the depository during the year is *forty-one millions five hundred and ninety-two thousand one hundred and thirty*; and if to this be added the probable issues by foreign societies, the number will reach *forty-seven millions*; making a total circulation, in sixty-four years, of *one thousand and six millions*.

Foreign Operations.—In France the society has paid for the reprinting of various old tracts, and the publication of 6 new tracts, for the free circulation of 200,000 tracts, and 50,000 *Almanachs des bons Conseils*; and for a large number of libraries from the Paris Sunday-school Union, and the Toulouse Book Society. It has circulated 76,645 tracts in Belgium; 120,000 in Sweden; 237,000 from Stuttgart, and more than a million in other parts of Germany. It has published 120,000 copies of 17 different works in Italian, besides 80,000 copies of the *Amico di Casa*. It has also published 18,000 tracts in Bulgarian, 8,000 in Arabo-Turkish, and 3,000 in Armenian. In the vernaculars of India it has printed over 600,000 books, tracts, and periodicals, and 200,000 in Chinese. In Africa it has enlarged its operations at the Cape, and in America has spread its publications through all the British possessions.

Grants.—Its grants have amounted to 13,573*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.*, towards which the public has contributed in subscriptions, donations, &c., 9,063*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.*, and 1,965*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* in legacies. These grants include 6,840,330 publications, valued at 6,839*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.*, made to various societies, congregations, and private persons in the British Isles.

Funds.—The receipts from sales amounted to 84,272*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, and from benevolent sources to 11,029*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*, making a total of 95,302*l.* 3*s.*

The Rev. E. GARRETT, B.A., incumbent of St. Bartholomew's, London, moved the first resolution:—

That the report, an abstract of which has now been read, be adopted, and that the following ministers and gentlemen constitute the committee for the ensuing year, with power to fill up all vacancies:—Treasurer, John Gurney Hoare, Esq.;—Honorary Secretaries, Rev. W. Weldon Champney, M.A.; Rev. Robert Vaughan, D.D.;—Committee, Rev. J. T. Davidson, Rev. E. Mannering, Rev. L. B. White, M.A., Rev. J. H. Titcomb, A.M.; Messrs. T. R. Bennett, M.D., T. Chambers, Q.C., C. H. Moore, S. B. Pattison, H. C. Pierson, S. B. Power, E. Rawlings, and C. T. Ware.

He spoke in the highest terms of the society as an auxiliary to the work of the Christian Church, and commended it to increased support.

The Rev. NEWMAN HALL seconded the resolution. As he was meditating that morning on the banks of the Humber on the speech he was to deliver in the evening, it occurred to him that there were fewer objects in nature of more interest than the source of great rivers. They rose in obscurity, but fertilised and blessed the land as they passed along, broadening and deepening as they went, till some of them bore on their bosom the commerce of the world. When under the shadow of their magnificent cathedral he mused upon the source of that great river of truth and love which was flowing not through England only but through the world. What holy precepts, what blessed promises, what seeds of eternal life this river was carrying forth, to beautify and gladden the human race, and to make many a moral wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose!

There was scarcely a country in the whole world which was not visited and blessed by its waters. A wise and beneficent treaty had been concluded between France and England, by which English fabrics were being poured into France. He would say, let us, emulating them, pour a flood of evangelical literature into France. The fact that 150,000 copies of Mr. Radcliffe's addresses had been sold in the streets of Paris, and that Mr. Spurgeon's sermons sold by tens of thousands throughout Europe, proved the public mind on the continent was ready for the reception of truth. Some persons feared that the enlarged intercourse between France and England would not be to the advantage of the latter. (Hear, hear.) Let us hope otherwise. There were some things in which we might imitate our neighbours to our improvement—politeness for example, not merely French polish. (Laughter and cheers.) We could learn from them also something in the way of sobriety—learn to be innocently merry without getting intoxicated. (Cheers.) Instead of their influencing us for evil, let us try and influence them for good. When a spiritual and a worldly man came together it did not follow that the spiritual man was to become worldly, but it was his duty to try and make the worldly man spiritual. There was order in France now, and opportunity for getting our religious books circulated amongst and read by the people. Let us make the best and immediate use of the means thus placed within our reach for doing good. Cross over to Belgium, steeped in Popery, with here and there a few Protestant congregations which had been greatly aided by grants from this society. There were two parties in Belgium, the priestly party and the Radical or Liberal party. They both consulted the English religious publications. The priestly party said to the Radicals, "See how much less religious you are than the English"; and the others retorted, "See how they are opposed to Papal assumptions." Let us hope that the non-party literature of England would convey truth to the minds of both. Go on to Denmark, which now most deservedly excited peculiar attention from the English people. (Cheers.) Denmark needed Evangelical help. A clergyman resident in that country related that so little was the Bible read by the people, that though it is the custom to confirm young people at fourteen or fifteen years of age, very few of them had read or even seen the New Testament. Let us convey truth to that country. We were much indebted to Denmark—even the rough old Danish invasion proved an advantage to us, and now a lovelier invasion—one of beauty and goodness; and let us repay them by invading them with our theology and our Christian literature. Pass into Sweden, and it would be found that our tracts had greatly aided revivals there; and when persecution deprived the people of regular religious services, who could tell the amount of instruction and consolation afforded by the private reading of publications such as those issued by this society? (Hear, hear.) In Russia the work of the society had been much impeded. Political despotism could never favour religious freedom; and there was in Russia an instinctive dread of allowing the utterance of opinions differing from those of the dominant Church. But this society had done a good deal in Russia in past times, was doing something now, and was prepared, whenever opportunity offered itself, to do more. All Englishmen were deeply interested in the tremendous conflict now going on between Russia and Poland. (Cheers.) A peace man might be forgiven for desiring to stand by the side of the Polish patriots; and if ever there was a case in which the right of intervention in behalf of a people struggling for their political rights could be pleaded, it was surely that of Poland. (Cheers.) We could, however, give the Poles nothing but sympathy; but English Christians might cherish the hope that the day would come when they could aid them to rescue themselves from a thralldom still worse than that against which they now rebelled. (Cheers.) Something had been done in Germany. When that country was mentioned many people thought of heretical writers on theology; but it should be remembered that there were good as well as bad German theologies; some most valuable refutations of error and vindications of truth had come to us from Germany. But if these were more suited to the scholar and the teacher, the publications of this society were eminently suited to the great mass of the people in Germany, and by hundreds of thousands let them be circulated. The same Gospel found its way to the hearts of men all over Europe. (Hear, hear.) Should he speak at all of Spain? Very little could be done there. Popery, which in England demanded, and he was glad to say received, perfect liberty, gave none itself; and when Popery cried for liberty, the real meaning was, liberty to silence all religious teachers except its own. (Cheers.) Was not this revealed in the fact that Matamoros and his companions had been sentenced for years to the galleys chained to felons and murderers for the mere fault of reading God's Holy Word? (Cries of "Hear.") There seemed to be no way of imparting the truth to Spain except by smuggling. He objected, as he presumed all present did, to the smuggling of opium into China, and to the breaking of the neutrality laws in reference to America; but as regards the great battle between truth and error we must be belligerents and not neutrals, and never hesitate to run a blockade, or to smuggle into Spain that Bible and kindred books which the Spanish priesthood and their victims had declared to be contraband articles. Help had been given to kindred societies in Switzerland; and how much English travellers could do in that country—"the playground of England," as it had been termed—if they would leave behind them, wherever they went,

copies of the Scriptures and the publications of this society—put them into the hands of the servants in the hotels, leave them in cottages, and present them to the guides—endeavouring thus, in return for their services, to guide them up the mountain of holiness and into the paradise of God? (Cheers.) Crossing over the mountains of Switzerland, pass into Italy, and before descending into the valleys, survey the enchanting scenery, beauty everywhere meeting the eye. Passing onwards, you observe a cottage, and a young man sitting in the garden, with his head bandaged. He is a soldier who was wounded at Solferino, and had returned home invalided. He is reading a religious tract. As we watch him another young man, a theological student from Geneva, is seen strolling along the valley. He looks sad and thoughtful. He is also an invalid, and is there for his health. He is sighing that he can do no work for God. He accosts the wounded soldier, who is poring over his book, and asks what he is reading. The young Italian replies:—"It is a book I prize more than gold. It was given to me by a young Frenchman who fought in the same regiment with me, and who, night after night, when we were in the camp, would take out this very book and read it, and seemed most happy in reading it. Before we went into battle we agreed to help each other, if either should be wounded. My friend was wounded mortally; and, as he lay dying, he told me to open his knapsack and take out this little book and treasure it. Said he, 'It was the means of leading me to Jesus, and I can meet death without fear,—do you read it.' Sir," continued the young Italian, "I have read it, and I have found Jesus by it too." (Cheers.) What was the delight of this student from Geneva on finding that the little book was an English tract which he had himself, a few years before, translated into the French language. So that, while he fancied he was useless, God was blessing his work. (Cheers.) This was a well-authenticated fact, and doubtless there were a multitude of similar facts unrecorded. (Hear, hear.) Religious-tract distributors were busy in Tuscany, Piedmont, and Naples. A few years ago this would not have been tolerated, and the Word of God was not to be bought at any of the booksellers' shops, in the language of the people. Thank God the days of tyranny there were over and gone! (Cheers.) Bibles were now openly sold in the streets of Milan, and the priests of Rome might scowl and gnash their teeth, but could not prevent it. (Cheers.) Some said that this freedom in Italy would soon pass away. That he did not believe; the foundations of a new Italy were laid and could not be removed; but it was our wisdom and duty to make abundant use of present opportunity, and to take care that those foundations were well cemented with the glorious Gospel—that best guarantee of any nation's stability. (Cheers.) A disposition was growing among the people of Italy to investigate the principles of our Evangelical theology, and it would be strengthened by the opposition of the Pope and the priesthood. We could do much to call forth and strengthen this hopeful spirit, by going to them not as belonging to this or to that denomination, but as Christians carrying to them God's word, and proclaiming amongst them Jesus as the great High Priest, the Intercessor and the only Way of Salvation. Let us teach them to render homage to Jesus instead of to the Virgin, and to pay more reverence to the Scriptures than to relics. Might that city where Paul preached and suffered soon become a city where the Gospel in all its pristine purity shall be proclaimed, and the people being justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ! (Cheers.) In that fair land millions were in the bondage of superstition; let it be ours to endeavour to set them free and feel it to be an honour to be engaged in so holy a war of emancipation. New recruits were wanted, and those who had recruited long ago needed to have their zeal reawakened. Let us not despise small instrumentalities. Many a little pebble had brought down a Goliath, and many a little tract had led sinners to see the error of their ways. One single truth of God's Word, one precept, one promise conveyed by the Holy Spirit had been the means of a new destiny to an immortal soul—had awakened the joy of angels and added another to the many crowns of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Though on a dark and stormy sea
The mariner be tossed,
Yet if in heaven one star there be,
Those ocean depths are crossed.

Though in the thirly wilderness
The way-worn wanderer roam,
One fountain shall suffice to bless,
One path may lead him home.

(Cheers.) The resolution was adopted.

The Rev. Mr. RICHARDSON, of Bury St. Edmunds, moved the next resolution:—

That this meeting rejoice to hear of the efforts of the society to provide able and adequate replies to the attacks at present made upon the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; and also to satisfy the increasing demand for tracts and periodicals, by a supply containing, in various forms, sound evangelical teaching, both doctrinal and practical, and none other. It also rejoices to hear of the enlargement of the society's work in foreign countries, especially in Italy, India, and China; and trusts that Almighty God will bless the perusal of its several publications both at home and abroad to the end for which they are issued; and will dispose the hearts of Christians in every country to afford the society all necessary aid, both personal and pecuniary, in giving its publications a more extended circulation.

The Rev. C. H. SPURGEON, who was greeted with much applause, on rising to second the resolution, said he had been requested to express satisfaction that the Tract Society had circulated pure literature and the simple truth as it is in Jesus; and to urge upon his hearers the necessity for insisting in these days that our religious literature should contain nothing but the doctrines of the Gospel—man's ruin,

man's redemption, and man's regeneration. Read your tract before you give it away, was one of the first directions that should be given to a tract-distributor; read it and endeavour to fully understand it yourself, and then pray over it that you may be directed where to give it. This done, a blessing might be surely expected. They did not believe in witchcraft and charms, and consequently had no idea of there being any virtue in pieces of paper with holy words upon them. Truth, to be of any value, must be received into the mind. Men could not be carried to heaven in an insensible state. It was necessary first and foremost to possess the truth. Every tract should have in it the great unwritten creed of Evangelical Christendom, which was all the more firmly held for not having been embodied in a form of words. Despite all that was said about the divisions of the Christian Church, depend upon it they were mere lines upon the surface, not fissures in the rock; and that in their hearts all Christians were one. (Cheers.) The day had happily gone by already when it was thought necessary to talk much about Christian union, because it had been realised. It used to be thought something like the "happy family" on Waterloo Bridge to see ministers of different denominations met together on the same platform. They had now learned to see this to be their duty, and to feel that when they had done all in this matter they were unprofitable servants—that they ought to have loved each other long ago, and even now far better than they did. (Cheers.) There was still "one holy Catholic and apostolic church" (cheers); and that church was not loose in its creed. It had a creed as firm as if it were of cast iron, and could no more be removed than the granite foundations of the globe,—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost,—seen most plainly by us around the cross where the bleeding Saviour offers himself a sacrifice for sin. These truths constituted the warp and the woof of the Christian creed; they felt that they could not disbelieve them, could not be Christians if they did not hold them fast, especially those truths about Jesus, of whom they could always say, "We cannot be right in the rest, unless we think rightly of Him." (Cheers.) But there were some rising up who objected to doctrinal preaching. It was not necessary, they said, in these days—practice and perhaps a little experience, but no doctrine. But really if you take away the doctrine, you have taken away the backbone of the manhood of Christianity—its sinew, muscle, strength, and glory. (Cheers.) Those men reminded him of Philip when he wished to enslave the men of Athens, and would have them to give up their orators. Demosthenes replied, "So said the wolves—they desired to have peace with the shepherds, but the dogs must be first given up—those pugnacious dogs that provoked quarrels. The wolves would lie down peacefully with the lambs, and delight themselves with the sheep, if only those bad-tempered dogs were hanged." (A laugh.) So perfect peace was promised among the sects if doctrines were given up; but depend upon it, these were, after all, the preservation of the church, which without them would soon cease to be. (Cheers.) These men said they loved the house; they would not touch the furniture in it—not they; they loved the doors thereof, and the floor thereof, and especially the table thereof, to the cupboard thereof—(laughter and cheers)—they would by no means touch those things—they only wished to remove certain stones that projected a little above the floor—they would be quite content to get rid of the foundations; to have them torn up and sold for old bricks. (Laughter.) His reply was, "We don't see it, gentlemen; we cannot agree to the terms." (Cheers.) The men and their communications were known, and the school in which they had studied, and we were not ignorant of his devices who is the master and head of the school. "Burn the charts; what's the use of the charts? What we want is a powerful engine, a good copper-bottomed ship, an experienced captain, and strong able-bodied mariners. Charts! ridiculous nonsense,—antiquated things—we want no charts, destroy every one of them! Our fathers used to navigate the sea by them, but we are wiser than they were. We have pilots who know every sand and sunken rock, who can smell them beneath the water—(laughter)—or by some means find them out. Men know what's o'clock now-a-days; we don't want chronometers." So they put to sea without the charts; and, looking across the waters, we may expect to witness the shipwreck of those, who thought themselves so wise, and fear sometimes lest we should hear their last gasp as they sink and perish. Professing themselves wise, they become fools. (Cheers.) The clap-trap cry of those who would put down doctrine was "liberty"—liberty to think as you like, and to do as you will, to believe or not believe. No man, in these days, would say a word against liberty of conscience; and for himself he cared very little for all the acts of Parliament in the world by which men were to be made religious, except so far as the moral point went—believing it to be only the inwrought work of the Spirit of God that could make any man right before God. (Hear, hear.) But there were some who said it was necessary there should be teachers in the church to instruct their hearers that black is white, alongside of those who hold by the old truth. The claim for such liberty reminded him of an occurrence some years ago in Ratcliffe-highway. A man had a menagerie of wild beasts; and the elephant, fumbling about with his trunk one night, got hold of the peg which fastened up his den. So he got out, and being a member of the Liberation Society—(laughter)—he begged Mr. Hall's pardon—the Emancipation Society

—(renewed laughter)—he proceeded to let out the lions, and the wolves, and the jackals. There was soon a terrible noise in the backyard, and the master waking up, rushed in among the animals with his whip, and soon had them back to their respective quarters. But for his promptness there might have been great mischief done to the people of London. The teachers of false doctrine were playing the part of the elephant, and the lies which they were letting loose upon society must be hunted back to their dens. (Cheers.) There must be no liberty to pull up the buoys and to destroy the lighthouses of the Christian church. It was an entire mistake to suppose that the people did not want doctrine; for the unlettered folks were just those who would receive it best and love it most. An illustration of this happened to himself last week. Staying at the house of a lady in Holland, he was requested to speak to the three female servants, who had been interested in the reading of his sermons. He asked them, in the course of the conversation, which sermons they had liked best? One mentioned a discourse on the doctrine of Election, the second one on Justification, the third one on Imputed Righteousness—all doctrinal sermons. Depend upon it, if rich people did not want doctrine, the poor did. And observe, the Reformation had never succeeded in any country where its principles had only taken root in the mind of the higher classes. There were several nobles among the martyrs during the Reformation in Spain, but it was short-lived, because the people were not with it. When the sun shines only upon the mountain tops the day has not fully dawned; but when the lowest valleys were flooded with its light then the day had fully risen. (Cheers.) So when all classes in Spain should have received the truth, then the day of reformation would be fully come. If we would diffuse Gospel light throughout England we must begin low down. And just in proportion as the people were instructed in the truth would the assaults of its enemies fall powerless. Let the publications of this society therefore be instructive and interesting, so that they would be read to edification. He had seen tracts that he likened to chips in porridge. They were dreadfully dry, so stupefying in the effect that by attempting to read them you might be sure of a sound sleep. (A laugh.) There was no reason why truth should not be made interesting, or why Sunday reading should be intolerably dull. But he found that the portions for Sundays of Ketto's "Daily Readings" were far less interesting than all the rest. He saw no reason why the highest truth should always be done up dry. (Cheers.) A stroke of humour even in a sermon, was not always out of place, but like a flash of lightning on a dark night added to the general impression and the effect upon the mind. Let truth be presented to the people in an interesting way, and so the best antidote would be administered to the errors contained in those books of which far too much was said. No impression could be made upon the darkness except by the exhibition of light. When the measure was full of wheat there was no room for the chaff; and so when the mind and the soul was filled with truth error could not enter. Let them shoot at the man of straw in the cherry-tree if they would, but assuredly the best controversy in the world was the preaching of truth. When the old philosopher said that men did not live, his opponent in the controversy walked about, and that was the best refutation that could be given; and if we went about doing good to men we should give the best reply in all the world to those who rejected Christianity. But, suppose this Tract Society should become inoculated with the evil virus. That would be a calamity indeed; if, instead of bread it should give a stone, instead of a fish a serpent, instead of an egg a scorpion. There were those among us who had so perverted the truth,—and he impeached before the bar of God and the elect angels, before the universal assembly of quick and dead at the great judgment, the men who dared to wear the garb of Christian ministers, and who replaced the truth on which our hopes alone could be safely reposed by some figment, some theory, some whimsy of their own. (Loud cheers.) Revivals not based on solid doctrine did not last long. Those only were the sure builders whose material was substantial truth. He rejoiced in the labours of his brother, Mr. Denham Smith, because he did not hesitate to bring out in his revival addresses even the higher doctrines of the Gospel. The more doctrines were taught the more Christian love and unity would be promoted. In conclusion, he would say, let us all become tract-distributors, scatter them on every side, and seek to bring men to Jesus. Don't be afraid to speak to people about their best interests, but approach them gently, enter not their houses rudely, but sometimes tap at the door and say, "May I come in?" God bless the Tract Society! May those who directed its operations have their own hearts imbued with truth, and then be made the instruments of imparting spiritual life to multitudes of others. (Cheers.)

The resolution was adopted, and the Dean of Dromore having pronounced the benediction, the meeting terminated.

THE IRISH EVANGELICAL SOCIETY, AND CONGREGATIONAL HOME MISSION.

The annual meeting was held on Monday evening at the Poultry Chapel, under the presidency of Thomas Chambers, Esq., common serjeant of the City of London. After singing and prayer,

The CHAIRMAN said that the society whose anniversary they had met to celebrate possessed many claims upon the Congregational churches of England. In the first place it was evangelical. This constituted its

paramount claim. Its object was to preach the Gospel. But it was also Congregational, because its founders believed that to be the most legitimate form of church government, and best adapted for the work in hand. Then further, it was Irish in the sphere of its operations, and Ireland greatly demanded such help from us. For many hundreds of years England has had a great deal to do with Ireland, and was likely to have for centuries still to come; and the effect of the labours of the agents of this society would certainly be to render the relations of the two countries less painful than they had sometimes been even in recent times. By making people evangelically-Christian, social as well as personal benefit was conferred upon them, and good government was far more likely to be secured. It was, therefore, a cause for gratitude that renewed interest was being felt in the work of this society, as was plainly indicated by the fact that its income had doubled during the past year, and this, although the receipts of most of the religious societies had fallen off in consequence of the bountiful relief of distress in the North. But still the income was far from being sufficient, and he should rejoice in learning that it continued to be doubled every year. (Hear.) It could not be said that the people of Ireland were an irreligious people, but yet they needed sadly to be taught the Gospel of Christ. (Hear.) They had not been morally elevated by the religious system under which they had been taught, as had been shown in the debates on the Prison Ministers Bill. The enormous proportion of the criminals in our jails were declared to be Irish Romanists, and nearly the whole of the men convicted of the Staleybridge riots were also Irish. For our own sakes, therefore, as well as for the interests of the inhabitants of the sister country, it behoved us to support, to the best of our ability, all efforts directed to the evangelisation of Ireland. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. WM. TARBOTTON, the secretary, read an abstract of the report. After asserting and illustrating the importance of the work in which the society is engaged, the document presented the following summary of facts:—"Few of the stations of this society are more deeply interesting than that of Galway. Your devoted agent there, the Rev. John Lewis, continues, amidst the fluctuations so singularly incident to Irish mission work, to enjoy tokens of the Divine favour. Our operations at Youghal still enjoy the same smile of the Most High. Mr. Jackson receives encouragement both from the kindly regards of the Christian community generally, and from the hope that the word preached is, to some, the means of conversion. The cause of Christ in Mallow is favoured with gratifying prosperity. Most marked is the change between the aspect of things now, and five or six years ago, at Maryborough,—the chapel, which had been, for some time past, closed for repairs, was recently opened, amidst circumstances of much encouragement. Protestants of all denominations generously contributed towards the expense. In Dublin, of the two ministerial agencies assisted by the society, one has become vacant by the retirement, at the close of the last year, of the Rev. D. Harding from the pastorate of the church in King's-inn-street. The Rev. George Silly continues his labours in Salem Chapel, Kilmainham, with rather more encouragement than for a little time before. In Dublin, in addition to the ministerial agencies aided, the society has two missionaries, whose work is as important as it is varied, and whose operations have been attended with much of the Divine favour. Mr. Munro gives himself to the duties connected with the general Scottish City Mission; while Mr. Fenwell conducts services of different kinds, at the premises in Whitefriar-street, and adopts a general system of visitation and instruction. Prayer-meetings, public addresses, Bible-classes, an adult school, benefit societies, and weekly meetings of the agents, are amongst the means employed. In accordance with an intimation in last year's report, the Rev. J. W. Johnstone, B.A., removed to Parsonstown, adopting it, instead of Portumna, as the centre of his mission stations. It is hoped that the change will operate beneficially upon his sphere of labour. Under the ministry of the Rev. J. E. Judson, the cause at Newry presents appearances growingly hopeful. Ere long it is anticipated that a new church edifice will be reared. At Richhill the Rev. C. Skuse is occupying the field with diligence and effect. The agent at Moy, Mr. Toccock, is labouring earnestly, and needs, as he deserves, the warm sympathy of the friends of Christ's cause. At Donaghmore, too, the Rev. J. W. Lane continues to spread abroad the knowledge of the only Saviour and with pleasing tokens of success. Donaghy, the cause in which originated in the time of the late revival in the conversion and labours of Mr. Kelso, now our minister there—is a place on whose account the committee cannot but feel a deep interest. The neighbourhood was remarkable for ungodliness, and was resorted to on the Sabbath by persons far and near for dog-fighting and cock-fighting. No service was held in it by a minister of any denomination when Mr. Kelso commenced his labours; but by the Divine blessing, a great change has been wrought. The evils that formerly distinguished the place have disappeared; and instead of being the haunt of vice and Sabbath-breaking, the place is now remarkable for a neat and commodious chapel, and a comfortable manse, and for regular and numerous religious services. A good work has unquestionably been done here, by the conversion of souls, and the reformation of manners. The operations of the society in Armagh have, during the past year, been exposed to painful vicissitudes and disappointments. At the beginning of last year, as was then reported, arrangements were made, which it was hoped, would enable the cause there to assume its proper position. By appointment of the committee, the late Rev. J. W. S. McAssey commenced preaching. Eminently gifted and universally beloved, it was fondly trusted that this youthful servant of God would be made the means of reviving the drooping interest. Had he lived, little doubt was felt that such would have been the fact. But God's ways are not as our ways. Scarcely had he begun his labours here, before he was called upon to end them. After the second Sabbath, he was seized with hæmorrhage of the lungs, and never preached again. For some four months he lingered, and on the 28th of October, 1862, in joy and triumph passed to the skies. Since the death of the Rev. Mr. McAssey, the pulpit has been variously supplied, but at present no permanent settlement has been effected. Carrickfergus, which a year ago was low and disheartening, is now happily settled, the Rev. Duncan Fletcher, late of the London Missionary Society, Jamaica, having a few months since accepted a unanimous call from the people, among

whom he is labouring with most cheering prospects. In Straid, the Rev. J. Bain continues still to pursue the great object of his life—the extension of the Saviour's empire. His people feel, as the people at nearly all the stations feel, the pressure which the successive deficient harvests and continuous unfavourable weather have occasioned. But, notwithstanding, he holds on his way, cheered by the Master's presence while doing the Master's will. The Rev. D. Quern has difficulties to contend with at Ballyraige, which, though trying to his faith, neither weaken his efforts nor extinguish his hopes. At Coleraine the manifestations of Divine favour continue to be enjoyed. The devoted agent, the Rev. J. Kydd, has now the gratification of publishing the glad tidings in a chapel more worthy of the town and of the cause than that in which he formerly ministered. This new sanctuary was opened for Divine worship in May last, when the Revs. Dr. Urwick and R. Sewell officiated. Concerning Donegal, the committee have hope that the time to favour the cause, so long barren and dreary, may not be far distant. Our valued friend and brother, the Rev. Noble Shepherd, of Sligo, kindly superintends the management of the school in that town, and the operations of the reader, Mr. Breman, at Eashy, a few miles away. In the important town of Belfast, the committee are anxious, as speedily as possible, to extend their operations greatly, assured that in such a place, with so vast a population, and with the pressure of the Papacy so much feebler than in other parts of Ireland, efforts, wisely, vigorously, and prayerfully made would be crowned with the Divine blessing. With the sympathy and good wishes of the Independent church already established there, a second Independent cause has recently been originated by this society; and the hope is entertained that, ere very long, under the care of a well-qualified pastor and preacher, gratifying success will have to be reported. Openings for new spheres of labour have, during the past year, been brought before the committee. One of these has been already embraced; and they trust that at no distant time they may have to record others as profitably occupied. Besides the Evangelists and Scripture-readers already referred to, there are several others co-operating with, and under the direction of, the ministers, and in whose success the committee, from time to time, experience great satisfaction. In Limerick, where the church, so long fostered by this society, has for some years past been self-supporting and vigorously active in the diffusion of the blessed Gospel, Mr. Davis pursues his course, under the guidance of the principal friends there. At Ballinasloe, Mr. O'Connell diligently labours; Mr. Wise at Newry, Mr. McLaughlin at Cappah, Mr. Robinson at Donaghmore, Mr. Brook at Galway, Mr. Elliott in Londonderry, and Mr. Carroll in Armagh, are all in their several departments continuing steadfast, and are privileged from time to time to tell of trophies which Divine grace, through their instrumentality, has won to Jesus. Towards the close, the report contained the following paragraph:—

"That our churches are already beginning to manifest an increasing sympathy with this great cause—a sympathy which, being not impulsive, but wise and slow, gives promise of abiding, the committee are happy to believe. The balance-sheet of the treasurer supplies the proof. Last year's account presented the income of the society as 2,920*l.* 14*s.* 8*d.* But of that amount, 767*l.* 16*s.* were previous balances in hand; and 357*l.* 16*s.* were moneys received on loan and interest on deposits. Thus, the actual receipts for that year (although, during the latter half of it, the two societies were united) were 1,795*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* This year, through the gracious kindness of God in disposing the hearts of so many of his children to help us, our *bona fide* net receipts amount to 3,719*l.* 10*s.* 5*d.*; being, as is evident, considerably more than double what they were the year before. Since the account was closed, upwards of 50*l.* have been received, intended for, and belonging to, the year's finances; but, just too late for the audit. This would make the entire receipts more than 3,770*l.* Two hundred and fifty pounds of this amount, it is but just to state, were special donations for the purpose of liquidating a debt. But, excluding even these, the income of the year just closed has still nearly, if not quite, doubled the actual income of the year before. Or, tried by another test, the results are equally gratifying. Two years ago, that is, when the Irish Evangelical Society and the Congregational Home Mission existed as two distinct societies, their united receipts (excluding their balances) amounted to 3,738*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*, being less than the amount contributed during the last year. Your committee mention these facts, not in the spirit of boasting—God forbid!—but for the purpose of adoring the Great Head of the Church for his undeserved and special mercy in reviving the confidence of the followers of Christ in our organisations for Ireland's good, in cheering the hearts of those engaged in carrying out our arduous designs, and in supplying pledges of his gracious purpose still more abundantly to bless our united efforts in time to come. To him alone do they look for prosperity. To him alone do they render all the praise."

The Rev. A. RALEIGH moved—

That the report, an abstract of which has now been read, be adopted, printed, and circulated, under the direction of the committee; and that this meeting would record an expression of its devout gratitude to God, for those encouraging indications of increasing sympathy with the cause of Irish Missions which that report supplies.

Adverting to the glowing descriptions which travellers in Ireland had given of its lovely scenery, he inferred it to be the design of Providence that the people should possess a moral nature to correspond. The dwellers in a beautiful house, adorned by its Creator, ought to be great and good. He believed that God had a wise and important purpose in bringing England and Ireland into union. He did not say, "Repeal the union." (Hear, hear.) Ireland could not be pushed away into the Atlantic, though some of our statesmen might perhaps be wearied with the social and religious problems it presented. He that setteth fast the mountains had set fast that island, and she waits for His law from us, and for His love through us; and if we were faithful to our duty, Ireland would become our friend, and our joy in the day of the Lord. Some one expressed the wish that Ireland could be submerged in the waters of the Atlantic, and that was too frequently the way men desired to get rid of their problems. Not so with God, whose long-suffering and lovingkindness never failed; and his word to us was, "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." (Cheers.) The very difficulties of which the chairman had spoken were an

additional reason why we should continue to labour for Ireland's good. Having elevated our banner we must not take it down. The Apostle Paul, when in Ephesus and wanting to go to Corinth, gave two reasons why he could not, and they were both applicable to this case—an effectual door was being opened, and there were many adversaries. There must be no quailing before the adversaries of Christ, and certainly fresh doors were being opened in Ireland. Let the work be prosecuted, then, with renewed diligence, assured that it would be accompanied with a Divine blessing. (Cheers.)

The Rev. A. M. HENDERSON, in seconding the resolution, vindicated the Irish character from the slanders which were often spoken concerning it, and contended that but for Papal influence they would be the finest people under heaven. He sketched the history of Ireland in order to show that the people of the North of England were evangelised by Irish Apostles, and that the Irish nation was the very last in Europe to succumb to the dominion of the Pope of Rome, and then only because of the wasteful incursions of the Danes, followed by the tyrannical acts of Henry II., instigated by the Pope. Ireland did not seek, but resisted the English connection; and so if she was a difficulty to us we were but suffering for the sins of our fathers. The refusal of Henry VIII. to permit the translation of the Bible into the Irish vernacular was taken advantage of by the Pope to gain still more closely the affections of the Irish people; and the Protestant successors of that monarch did not see the importance of a liturgy for the Irish, though they did for the English people, and thus they became wholly alienated from the Protestant faith. In all these things might be found the reason why Ireland is Popish; and to Irish Popery must be attributed Irish badness. (Hear, hear.) Amongst the Protestant population of Ireland crime was not more prevalent than in England. (Hear, hear.) He rejoiced in the amalgamation of the two societies, and could testify to the accuracy of the report which had been read by giving specific facts of the success attending the operations of the society, did time permit. A great and blessed work was going calmly and quietly on. To the existence of the Protestant Established Church in Ireland he attributed the circumstance of much of the hostility which was felt by the people to Protestant instruction. It was not surprising that they looked upon that Church as an insult to them. (Hear, hear.) If elementary education would lead men to Protestantism, a great change would have taken place in Ireland, for it was recorded in one of the papers read before the Social Science Congress in Dublin that in the matter of primary instruction, as reading, writing, and arithmetic, the Irish were the best educated people in the world. But this reformation would only be brought about by the operation of the Spirit's power, and that perhaps in a sudden and unlooked-for manner. But it became us, meanwhile, to preach the truth to them with more zeal and devotedness than ever. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was adopted.

The Rev. GEORGE SMITH moved:—

That, whilst deprecating the very thought of undervaluing other fields of Christian labour, this meeting cherishes, and desires to proclaim, the earnest conviction, that the work of Ireland's evangelisation demands, rightfully, a much deeper place in the solicitudes, and a much larger share in the practical efforts, of the Saviour's followers, than it has hitherto obtained.

He was, he said, disposed to look upon Ireland with a cheerful and hopeful spirit. At one time the anniversary of this society used to be very largely attended, and the extent of its work was over-estimated, but now the scope and value of its operations were decidedly under-estimated. (Hear, hear.) It had now an excellent committee, and two more suitable and able secretaries than the Rev. J. G. Manly, for Ireland, and the Rev. W. Tarbotton, for England, he believed could not be found. The agents, moreover, were pious and devoted men, and great good attended their labours. He strongly advised Christian gentlemen who were contemplating trips to the continent to go to Ireland instead, and they would be sure to get themselves interested in the country and its people. He related some anecdotes to show that with proper tact the Irish Romanists could be induced to listen to the preaching of the Gospel, and bore his testimony to the fact that not a few of the bishops and clergy of the Established Church in Ireland, in these days, were religious instructors of the right stamp. It had been affirmed, and he believed with much truth, that the agents of this society had been largely the means of the improvement of tone apparent in that Church. (Hear, hear.) And at the same time it had been the means of leading multitudes to Christ. The labour expended, therefore, had not been in vain. (Hear, hear.) He doubted not that the time would come when the kingdom and glory of Christ would be revealed in Ireland, and then it would be one of the most attractive of islands under the entire canopy of heaven. (Cheers.)

The Rev. J. H. WILSON, in seconding the resolution, related a conversation which he had recently had in Dublin with a carman who drove him to the castle—where he had been invited by the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, for the purpose of showing that the way to get Romanists to listen to Gospel teaching, was by putting forth the truth in a more combative spirit, and by frankly admitting that pious members of the Papal Church could enter heaven in spite of the errors of the system. He was glad that the managers of this society were no longer content to confine themselves to the rural districts, but had resolved to occupy the great centres of population. He believed the society to have still a most important and extensive work to do.

The resolution was adopted.

The Rev. NEWMAN HALL moved:—

That Thomas Meredith Coombs, Esq., be respectfully requested to continue his valued services as treasurer during the ensuing year; that the Rev. T. W. Aveling, of London, and the Rev. Dr. Urwick, of Dublin, be the honorary secretaries; and the Rev. William Tarbotton, of London, and the Rev. J. G. Manly, of Dublin, the secretaries; that the following gentlemen be appointed as the British Branch of the committee (names read), and that the following gentlemen, whose names have been approved at the annual meeting recently held in Dublin, be also appointed as the Irish Branch of the committee (names read).

He set out by expressing his great respect and affection for the secretary of the society, and by stating the claims which he conceived it to have upon English Christians. Ireland assuredly needed the Gospel. Doubtless there were many Christians in the Romish Church, but the tendency of the system was to conceal

Christ from the minds of the multitude; and in Ireland the Bible was practically, if not positively, withheld from the people. It was a miserable system, and had spread a thick darkness over the land. Compassion, therefore, for people should lead to the support of this and kindred agencies for the diffusion of light. Much injustice had been done to Ireland by certain ecclesiastical arrangements, and those of us who had had no share in them ought to let the people understand that Protestantism as such was not chargeable with the social wrongs they had suffered; and truth taught by those against whom no charge could be made would be most likely to be listened to. He would especially urge that we should go to the people, not with denials of dogmas which they believed, so much as with the teaching of positive truth, seeking rather to lead them to Christ than to merely forsake Popery; and it was because the agents of this society acted in this way that he gave it his hearty support. (Cheers.)

The Rev. R. REDPATH seconded the resolution without making a speech. It was then adopted.

A vote of thanks to the chairman, moved by Mr. Tarbotton and seconded by the Rev. J. Pulling, and the Doxology and benediction, brought the meeting to a close.

CHESHIRE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.—The annual meeting of the Independent churches in Cheshire was held in the Congregational church, Oxton-road, Birkenhead, on Wednesday, April 22. About fifty ministers and delegates assembled at a conference in the morning, when Joseph Thompson, Esq., of Bowdon, was called to the chair. Grants were made to churches in the county requiring aid, and other business in connexion with the union was transacted. The Rev. Charles Goward was also received into the union. In the evening of the same day a public meeting was held in the church, on home missions, at which Alfred H. Cowie, Esq., presided. The Rev. C. Chapman, of Chester, introduced the subject in a paper on "The Local Obligations of the Church." The Rev. S. W. McAll, of Macclesfield, the Rev. C. Goward, J. Thompson, Esq., and S. Rigby, Esq., of Warrington, also addressed the meeting.

CHRISTIAN VERNACULAR EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR INDIA.—The fifth annual meeting of the supporters of this society was held at Willis's Rooms on the 4th inst.; the Right Hon. Sir John Lawrence presided, and on the platform were the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, M.P., Colonel Rowlandson, Rev. James Long, &c. The chairman having opened the meeting, the report was read. It stated that a training institution had been established in the Madras Presidency, and arrangements were making to establish one in the Punjab. The receipts during the year had been 4,308*l.*, and the expenditure had been 3,862*l.* The Hon. Arthur Kinnaird moved the adoption of the report, and congratulated the meeting on the good the society had accomplished since its formation. The prospects of Christianising India had never been so bright as they were now, and there was the greatest encouragement for the society to continue its efforts. The means which the society employed were admirably suited to the ends desired, and he hoped it would obtain liberal and increased support. Colonel Rowlandson seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously. Several gentlemen afterwards addressed the meeting.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.—The annual meeting of this society took place on Thursday week, at St. James's Hall, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, supported by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Bishops of St. Asaph, Sydney, Montreal, Melbourne, Goulburn, Bishop Chapman, &c. The Rector of St. James's having opened the proceedings with prayer, the chairman in the course of his opening speech said, there were formerly in the territories which constituted the colonial dependencies of this empire in America only four ordained clergymen, and now they could reckon 60 bishops and 3,000 clergymen. Still, however, increased subscriptions were necessary, and especially as there was no doubt that there would shortly be an extensive emigration to the colonies, owing to the distress which existed amongst a large class of the labouring community. The annual report was then read. It stated that the total income of the society amounted to 93,326*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.* being about the same as last year. The total number of missionaries connected with the society was 488, being an increase of 36 during the last six months. A large number of these missionaries received their training at St. Augustine College, and all underwent a careful examination from the bishops connected with the society. The society has now been engaged for 162 years in endeavouring to plant the Church of Christ among our countrymen abroad and among the heathen. The society desires to provide this year, from its general fund, for the maintenance in whole or in part of 488 missionaries and a large number of catechists and schoolmasters now labouring in Australia, Bengal, Bombay, Borneo, British Columbia, Canada, Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, Constantinople, Guiana, Labrador, Madras, Mauritius, Natal, New Brunswick, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Rupert's Land, St. Helena, Tasmania, and the West Indies, and the demands on its resources increased every year. Amongst the speakers were the Bishops of Sydney, Melbourne, and Montreal, Mr. Whiteside, M.P., and Sir W. Burton. One of the resolutions spoke of the promise to assist the Bishop of Mauritius in planting mission in the island of Madagascar.

(For remainder of Anniversaries see Body of Paper.)